British Literature OER

British Gothic Literature Textbook

Jeremy Larance

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British Gothic Literature

Edited by Jeremy Larance

> "There is something at work in my soul, which I do not understand."
> — **Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prome*theus (1818)**

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The Gothic Tradition

Gothic Motifs

By John Bowen
The British Library
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Gothic is a literary genre, and a characteristically modern one. The word 'genre' comes from the Latin 'genus' which means 'kind'. So to ask what genre a text belongs to is to ask what *kind* of text it is. A genre isn't like a box in which a group of texts all neatly fit and can be safely classified; there is no essence or a single element that belongs to all Gothics. It is more like a *family* of texts or stories. All members of a family don't look the same and they don't necessarily have a single trait in common, but they do have overlapping characteristics, motifs and traits. The genre of Gothic is a particularly strange and perverse family of texts which themselves are full of strange families, irrigated with scenes of rape and incest, and surrounded by marginal, uncertain and illegitimate members. It is never quite clear what is or is not a legitimate member of the now huge Gothic family, made up not just of novels, poems and stories but of films, music, videogames, opera, comics and fashion, all belonging – and not quite belonging – together. But they do have some important traits in common.

It is usual for characters in Gothic fiction to find themselves in a strange place; somewhere other, different, mysterious. It is often threatening or violent, sometimes sexually enticing, often a prison. In Bram Stoker's 1897 *Dracula*, for example, Jonathan Harker, a young lawyer's clerk, suddenly finds himself trapped within Castle Dracula. That scene occurs in Central Europe, but often in classic Gothic fiction – in the novels of Ann Radcliffe for example – it takes place in distant, marginal, mysterious southern Europe; and it could just as easily be somewhere like Satis House in *Great Expectations*, a decaying mansion just down the road.

Just as places are often mysterious, lost, dark or secret in Gothic fiction, so too are its characteristic *times*. Gothics often take place at moments of transition (between the medieval period and the Renaissance, for example) or bring together radically different times. There is a strong opposition (but also a mysterious affinity) in the Gothic between the very modern and the ancient or archaic, as everything that characters and readers think that they've safely left behind comes back with a vengeance.

Sigmund Freud wrote a celebrated essay on 'The Uncanny' (1919), which he defined as 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'.undefined Gothic novels are full of such uncanny effects – simultaneously frightening, unfamiliar and yet also strangely familiar. A past that should be over and done with suddenly erupts within the present and deranges it. This is one reason why Gothic loves modern technology almost as much as it does ghosts. A ghost is something from the past that is out of its proper time or place and which brings with it a demand, a curse or a plea. Ghosts, like gothics, disrupt our sense of what is present and what is past, what is ancient and what is modern,

which is why a novel like *Dracula* is as full of the modern technology of its period – typewriters, shorthand, recording machines – as it is of vampires, destruction and death.

The Gothic world is fascinated by violent differences in power, and its stories are full of constraint, entrapment and forced actions. Scenes of extreme threat and isolation – either physical or psychological – are always happening or about to happen. A young woman in danger, such as the orphan Emily St Aubert in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) or Lucy Westenra in *Dracula*, is often at the centre of Gothic fiction. Against such vulnerable women are set the great criminals or transgressors, such as the villainous Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* or Count Dracula. Cursed, obscene or satanic, they seem able to break norms, laws and taboos at will. Sexual difference is thus at the heart of the Gothic, and its plots are often driven by the exploration of questions of sexual desire, pleasure, power and pain. It has a freedom that much realistic fiction does not, to speak about the erotic, particularly illegitimate or transgressive sexuality, and is full of same-sex desire, perversion, obsession, voyeurism and sexual violence. At times, as in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Gothic can come close to pornography.

Why do readers take such pleasure in Gothic's descriptions of frightening and horrible events, and might there be something wrong or immoral in doing so? The pioneering gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe was particularly troubled by these questions and in trying to answer them, made an important distinction between 'terror' and 'horror'. Terror, which she thought characterised her own work, could be morally uplifting. It does not show horrific things explicitly but only suggests them. This, she thinks, 'expands the soul' of the readers of her works and helps them to be more alert to the possibility of things beyond their everyday life and understanding. Horror, by contrast, Radcliffe argues, 'freezes and nearly annihilates' the senses of its readers because it shows atrocious things too explicitly.undefined This is morally dangerous and produces the wrong kind of excitement in the reader. Whereas there might be the fear or suggestion of the possibility of sexual assault or rape, for example, in a Radcliffe novel, there is explicit description of such scenes in *The Monk*. Terror, which can be morally good, characterises the former; horror, which is morally bad, the latter. Terror for Radcliffe is concerned with the psychological experience of being full of fear and dread and thus of recognising human limits; horror by contrast focuses on the horrific object or event itself, with essentially damaging or limiting consequences for the reader's state of mind.

Gothic is thus a world of doubt, particularly doubt about the supernatural and the spiritual. It seeks to create in our minds the possibility that there may be things beyond human power, reason and knowledge. But that possibility is constantly accompanied by uncertainty. In Radcliffe's work, even the most terrifying things turn out to have rational, non-supernatural explanations; by contrast, in Lewis's *The Monk*, Satan himself appears. The uncertainty that goes with Gothic is very characteristic of a world in which orthodox religious belief is waning; there is both an exaggerated interest in the supernatural and the constant possibility that even very astonishing things will turn out to be explicable. This intellectual doubt is constantly accompanied by the most powerful affects or emotions that the writer can invoke. The 18th-century philosopher and politician Edmund Burke in his 1757 *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of*

Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful made a vital distinction between the *beautiful* and the *sublime* which has shaped much modern thinking about art. Beauty, for Burke, is characterised by order, harmony and proportion. Sublime experiences, by contrast – the kind we get for example from being on a high mountain in a great storm – are excessive ones, in which we encounter the mighty, the terrible and the awesome. Gothic, it is clear, is intended to give us the experience of the sublime, to shock us out of the limits of our everyday lives with the possibility of things beyond reason and explanation, in the shape of awesome and terrifying characters, and inexplicable and profound events.

Gothic Roots and Conventions

By Sarah Gray

In the opening pages of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Manfred, whom readers will come to recognize as a definitive Gothic villain, sends a servant to fetch his son, Prince Conrad, who is to marry the Lady Isabella; however, the servant discovers Conrad crushed to death beneath an impossibly large, black-plumed helmet. Manfred, having only this one heir and a wife incapable of bearing additional children, immediately sets upon Isabella with the aim of taking her as his own wife. In the words of Robert Spector, the ensuing events, "provided all the machinery of the [Gothic] genre; its setting, theme, and subversive subject matter remained the stock material of the Gothic whatever changes it underwent" (9). Within the first chapter, readers encounter a prophecy, the supernatural, a beautiful virgin, a dutiful, abandoned wife, a persecuted maiden, ridiculous servants, a young, handsome peasant, and a ghost, all set within the labyrinthine corridors of the eponymous castle. Carol Margaret Davison builds on Spector's theory, pointing out how "as the vast majority of Gothic works illustrate, the component parts of this untidy and undying monster have been variously, regularly and successfully reconfigured to promote vastly different political and aesthetic ends and to speak to a broad cross-section of audiences and eras" (57). For the next several decades, authors as varied as Ann Radcliffe, Sir Walter Scott, and Jane Austen would utilize various aspects of the genre to different ends, each manipulating Gothic's stock elements to fit his or her unique aim.

The crumbling walls of Kenilworth Castle against the backdrop of a stormy sky filled with birds in flight evokes the gloomy aesthetic of early Gothic fiction (Tillibean(opens in new tab)).

Gothic literature arose at the end of the eighteenth century during a time of social, political, and economic unrest. Thus, it was and continues to be described as a reactionary genre devoted to returning repressed societal fears to our attention so we might expel them. The period typically associated with European Gothic fiction begins with Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto published in 1764 and ends with Charles Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer published in 1820. Though this time span is still used to describe the rise and "fall" of Gothic literature, the genre experienced in the 1790s a period of such vogue that it is now referred to as "the effulgence of Gothic" after Robert Miles' study of the same name. It was during this period that the most well-known Gothic authors, including Ann Radcliffe (discussed in "Female Gothic") and Matthew Gregory Lewis, published most of their fiction and inspired a deluge of

imitations, including William Beckford's Vathek, which became known to Gothic scholars as "The Radcliffe School" of terror or the "Lewisite" horror story.

Though Gothic fiction is most easily recognized via the formulaic plot devices and stock characters briefly mentioned above, one of its most important and often overlooked characteristics is its reliance on anachronisms to highlight the clash between "modernity" and "antiquity." Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall explain that the purpose of anachronism in Gothic fiction is to allow the "birth of modernity" through the anachronism's defeat and removal (278). The earliest Gothic narratives established a formula that remained largely unchanged both in England and America throughout what American Gothic scholar Donald A. Ringe refers to as the genre's "major phase," which roughly coincided with Miles' "effulgence" of Gothic in England (176). Indeed, the formula became so pervasive that Eve Sedgwick produced a book-length study dedicated to examining The Coherence of Gothic Conventions. In this cornerstone critical text, Sedgwick identifies many of Gothic literature's important features:

> "An oppressive ruin, a wild landscape, a Catholic or feudal society. You know about the trembling sensibility of the heroine and the impetuosity of her lover. You know about the tyrannical older man with the piercing glance who is going to imprison and try to rape or murder them" (9).

Having established our knowledge of these key points, Sedgwick identifies what Gothic scholars would eventually refer to as the "laundry list" of stock elements, at least a handful of which readers are likely to encounter in any Gothic tale.

These include the priesthood and monastic institutions; sleeplike and deathlike states; subterranean spaces and live burial; doubles; the discovery of obscured family ties; affinities between narrative and pictorial art; possibilities of incest; unnatural echoes or silences, unintelligible writings, and the unspeakable; garrulous retainers; the poisonous effects of guilt and shame; nocturnal landscapes and dreams; apparitions from the past; Faust- and Wandering Jew-like figures; civil insurrections and fires; the charnel house and the madhouse. (9-10)

Several of the items in Sedgwick's list have already been identified just in the first chapter of Walpole's Otranto, and many appear in Lewis' and Beckford's most well-known works excerpted in this textbook.

These stock elements of the Gothic combine to create a specific effect on readers. The ruined abbeys and mountainous landscapes of Ann Radcliffe's novels, for example, exist specifically, according to S.L. Varnado, to create moments when the reader "becomes aware of an objective spiritual presence," through "feelings of awe, mystery, and fascination" (15). This feeling, which Varnado, using Kant's terms, calls "the numinous," can oscillate between positive and negative aspects: awe and fear, fascination and repulsion, terror and horror. Jerrold Hogle describes the oscillation in Gothic fiction between terror and horror, stating that "the first of these holds characters and readers mostly in anxious suspense . . . while the latter confronts the principal characters with the gross violence of physical or psychological dissolution" (3). Edmund Burke's theories of sublimity and beauty supply basic categories that critics have employed to

analyze Gothic writers' moral effects. These categories appear in discussions about the ability of terror or horror to educate readers morally in terms of much-contested claims about the moral effects of pleasurable and painful experience. Burke defines beauty as "that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it," associating it with that which inspires love (83 and 103). He defines sublimity, on the other hand, as "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger," and claims that "it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling." (36 and 103). Through sensations of pain and pleasure associated with experiencing the beautiful and the sublime in art and life, individuals exercise and develop their mental and spiritual capacities. Beauty, then, is associated with the pleasurable, the social, domestic, and feminine, while the sublime, with power, masculinity, danger, fear, and even delight if the danger does not threaten destruction. Thus, Burke's ideas regarding masculine sublimity and feminine beauty underlie in part the "gendering" of the Gothic canon that occurred in twentieth-century literary criticism discussed in more depth in the next section.

Because of its presentation of "deteriorating castles, abbeys, and manor houses in foreign, usually Roman Catholic, countries" as sublime and beautiful, conservative elements of Protestant England saw Gothic fiction not only as too spectacular in its portrayal of disorder and decadence, but also too similar to Catholicism in its portrayal of superstitious and supernatural elements (Davison 93). On one hand, conservative elements denounced its involvement in a "promiscuous spread of knowledge" that would undermine social and individual safety and security by destabilizing authority and received traditions (Miles 16). The emotional content and effects of Gothic fiction and the sensational nature of its themes caused many, especially those in power, to deem the Gothic, and the arts in general, to be detrimental to society's moral growth (Kilgour 33). On the other hand, progressive elements recognized its capacity for mounting political and cultural critiques precisely by representing the Catholic Church and divine-rights monarchy as source and symbol of all that was bad in English history.

In Georgian England, the period that gave birth to Gothic literature was also the era that witnessed some of the most horrific atrocities and fantastic accomplishments in the country's history. These events resulted in large part from the agitations arising from demands for increased individual liberty and autonomy. The American Revolution from 1765-83, the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780, the Regency Crisis of 1788, the storming of the Bastille in 1789, the French Revolution from 1789-99, and the Reign of Terror from 1793-94, and a rapidly advancing industrial and capitalist economy supplied crises with which the people of England dealt daily along with cultural upheavals that resulted in the categorical instability that Michael McKeon and, more recently, Ian Haywood, describe as characteristic of the preoccupations that informed eighteenth-century fiction (382-399, 139).

The period surrounding the last Jacobite rebellion in 1745, and with it the end of the threat of the re-emergence of an English Catholic monarchy, witnessed a surge in anti-Catholic sentiment which persisted in various forms. This sentiment reflected sincere identification with England's Protestant past as well as Puritan values that ignited the Reformation and later spread to America. The widespread

feeling involved distrust, among many other things, of theatricality, or any semblance of what many Protestants viewed as the Catholic Church's idolatry of images and relics. Such fears also arose partly out of aristocratic fears that a return of Roman power would herald the loss of those establishments (abbeys and castles) which many Protestant English families had called their homes since Henry VIII's disestablishment, as well as more widespread fears of a return to the autocratic forms of divine rights monarchy (Miles 16-17). Anti-Catholic sentiment revived and strengthened during the years of the revolutionary foreign wars, culminating, along with fears of invasion, in a pervasive conservative backlash to the events of the French Revolution. The emergence of Gothic fiction during this era is often seen as an expression of the massive dislocation and threats to security that characterized political and cultural experience during this time in the form of coded critiques of power and domination at a time when direct political critique was punished as treason.

The atmosphere in the American colonies was no less volatile as the First Continental Congress began calling for the liberation of America from England. Gothic novels and dramas from England appealed to American audiences because they provided sensationalist entertainment but also because they narrated stories of vulnerability and conflict with which the young nation could identify. Haywood notes that for immigrants and citizens, America was synonymous with "freedom and democracy which were still unobtainable in Britain" (139). However, noting the conflicts inherent in the young nation's emergence, he also points out that American citizens "found it difficult to reconcile the image of America the pristine nation . . . with the violence of its history, the horrors of war . . . the continuing existence of chattel slavery . . . and the perilous fate of its indigenous peoples" (139-40). Instability and insecurity prevailed on both sides of the Atlantic as citizens of England and America experienced conditions of uncertainty and confusion that in themselves could only be described as Gothic.

Gothic fiction and drama, then, arose within the context of profound cultural turmoil. Critics have argued a number of angles from which the Gothic may be considered, citing the influence of a steadily rising middle class in England and America as well as a need for relatively safe forms of transgression as a method of questioning laws and morality that were seen by many as oppressive and an outcome of the conservative backlash that attended the revolutions and other less violent but nonetheless turbulent changes. As Maggie Kilgour notes, "the gothic is part of the reaction against the political, social, scientific, industrial, epistemological revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which enabled the rise of the middle class" (10-11). However, Gothic fiction did more than just react to these revolutions, it also projected ideal forms of citizenship and social relations that would result in a stable society that fostered well-being. Paula Backscheider states that "to become mass art, literature must appeal enough to become popular; to do this, it must speak to the hopes and fears of its audience at a particular moment in their history even as it does what popular art always does: entertain" (166). The Gothic did precisely that, critiquing the forces that destabilized society while presenting characters who could morally uplift the world. Though novels and drama enjoyed success in the decades preceding the eighteenth century, a single genre had never before garnered so much attention in itself. From 1760 to the early nineteenth

century, the Gothic novel and drama enjoyed such success that Gothic can be considered, as Backscheider does, the Western world's first popular culture phenomenon (166).

Essential to the Gothic's ability to obtain and sustain its audience's attention is its involvement in defining and arguing the boundaries between morality and transgression, and conformity and subversion regarding cultural categories and individual identities. Fred Botting argues that "from the eighteenth century onwards, Gothic texts have been involved in constructing and contesting distinctions between civilization and barbarism, reason and desire, self and other" (20). One of the ways that the Gothic could safely and effectively comment on contested aspects of English society, such as politics, education, religion, gender, and class in this era of instability was to position its critiques in terms of historically and geographically distant events and locations. Openly suggesting King George III was an insane autocrat would have been treason; however, commenting on the misdeeds of a foreign government or ruler from Italy or France two centuries earlier was perfectly acceptable. The Gothic, with its seemingly stock characters and recycled scenes, is actually situated and dynamic, reflecting specific fears and uncertainties that characterize the cultural milieu from which the work arises. Davison asserts:

> "Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary history is only truly rendered comprehensible when the Gothic, a middle class and often feminized form, is positioned in its legitimate place, examined as an aesthetic development in its own right, and recognized for its exceptional and enduring contributions to literary history" (14).

Gothic fiction not only contested patriarchal gender ideals, but it also threatened patriarchal control over those ideals through its immense success as a genre. The rapidly growing female reading public, Botting suggests, starved for representations of female experiences, forced the control of literary production "away from the guardians of taste . . . much to the chagrin of those interested in maintaining an exclusive set of literary values" (47). In other words, men—especially clergymen—began to lose influence regarding the production and consumption of literary texts due to women's increasing demand for romances. Botting points out that increased availability of all kinds of texts as a result of cheaper printing processes and the rise of circulating libraries meant that the "reading public included larger numbers of readers from the middle class, especially women," and reflected England's shift in cultural power from "an aristocratic and landed minority" to the middle classes (46). Despite cautionary warnings of the dangerous effects of fiction and romance by the clergy and other concerned with moral degeneration in turbulent times, the increasing ease with which women were able to obtain and read romances made it impossible to diminish what E.J. Clery describes as "the threat of female consumption of passion," which she suggests "could only be nullified by a change in attitudes" (18). She points out that only gradually "through the early years of the nineteenth century" did romances come to be considered as "harmless escapism, unlikely to be confused with reality" (18).

An additional form of support for the Gothic arose from then-current moral theories that sought to ally art to the cause of perfectibility, an important issue during the early years of the modern liberal project

that involved rationalizing power and authority after regicide and abdication, particularly by way of supporting claims to individual autonomy. Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), a judge in the supreme courts of Scotland and a prominent writer, disagreed with those who saw in fine art, including literature, threats to moral and social order. He outlined an aesthetic theory in 1761 that involved a dynamic that he called "ideal presence," intended to impress upon the newly crowned King George III the importance of patronizing the arts, especially modern literature, for the moral and political betterment of England. Building on moral sense theories regarding sympathy and benevolence, Kames defines ideal presence as a mode of being that occurs when one experiences sublimity and beauty and thus becomes susceptible to moral improvement. He argued that "the power of fiction to generate passion is an admirable contrivance, subservient to excellent purposes" (88). Kames credits ideal presence with the power to solidify social bonds:

> In appearance at least, what can be more slight than ideal presence? and yet from it is derived that extensive influence which language hath over the heart; and influence, which, more than any other means, strengthens the bond of society, and attracts individuals from their private system to perform acts of generosity and benevolence . . . For when events are related in a lively manner, and every circumstance appears as passing before us, we suffer not patiently the truth of the facts to be questioned" (100).

He suggests, then, that art has a distinct role in producing moral effects. Robert Miles describes Kames' concept of ideal presence as a process by which, in "our repeated surrendering to pleasurable reverie" through reading or the enjoyment of the arts, "we rehearse moral scenes: impressions are re-iterated, warmth infused, and the lesson imprinted" (15). In short, we are morally and spiritually improved through the repeated arousal of the senses that occurs when we engage with art.

Kames's description of the effects of art, however, points out one of the main reasons that many took issue with the Gothic and with Lewis' The Monk in particular. Their opinion was, according to Botting, that Gothic's "style seduces readers, leads them astray and leaves them unable to distinguish between virtue and vice and thereby expel the latter" (83). At issue was whether Gothic was teaching the "right" things. Gothic novels and dramas of the eighteenth century often feature women protagonists who experience terror at the thought of being married to a villain, kidnapped, imprisoned, or even murdered. The finer distinctions regarding the moral effects of Gothic fear thus provide another important focus for scholars of the Gothic. Botting, for example, elaborates on Kames', Radcliffe's, and others' ideas about terror and horror, arguing that though the terms "are often used synonymously, distinctions can be made between them as countervailing aspects of Gothic emotional ambivalence. If terror leads to an imaginative expansion of one's sense of self, horror describes the movement of contraction and recoil" (10). Botting's observations suggest that not only are the types of emotions that Gothic represents and elicits critical to its effects, but that it is equally important that the characters' actions match the emotion being elicited. In other words, Gothic novels aimed at moral improvement avoid featuring a virtuous action taking place during a moment of horror, which would result in a reader's recoil rather than imaginative expansion.

Such was and is the issue with Lewis' tale, a romance that, according to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale" (188).

In addition to excerpts from Lewis' The Monk, the other novels excerpted in this section—Walpole's The Castle of Otranto and Beckford's Vathek—represent not only the evolution of Gothic literature during this period of immense popularity but also the variety authors of the genre were able to achieve while still remaining within the otherwise strict confines of a largely formulaic genre. Walpole provides in The Castle of Otranto the first complete example of a Gothic novel from which later authors, took their cues. Beckford illustrates the malleability of the genre and its ability to be employed even as a mode or aspect within a larger piece of fiction since Vathek, as Thomas Keymer describes in "poised enigmatically between multiple possibilities—from oriental fantasy to punitive fable, from arch comedy to gothic sublime" (xxix). Finally, Lewis offers a view both of what makes Gothic literature so intriguing and so possibly dangerous while Coleridge's review of the novel helps illustrate the fear people felt at the widespread popularity of The Monk and other Gothic tales. However diverse, in these texts, we find just a few of the seeds that would ultimately grow into the works of today's writers of horror and psychological thrillers in both text and film.

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Early Gothic Excerpts

From A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757) by Edmund Burke

Of the sublime

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. I say the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure. Without all doubt, the torments which we may be made to suffer are much greater in their effect on the body and mind, than any pleasures which the most learned voluptuary could suggest, or than the liveliest imagination, and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body, could enjoy. Nay, I am in great doubt whether any man could be found, who would earn a life of the most perfect satisfaction at the price of ending it in the torments, which justice inflicted in a few hours on the late unfortunate regicide in France. But as pain is stronger in its operation than pleasure, so death is in general a much more affecting idea than pain; because there are very few pains, however exquisite, which are not preferred to death: nay, what generally makes pain itself, if I may say so, more painful, is, that it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrors. When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful, as we every day experience. The cause of this I shall endeavor to investigate hereafter.

Of the passion caused by the sublime

The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment: and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that, far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence, and respect.

from Terror

No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear. For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror be endued with greatness of dimensions or not; for it is impossible to look on anything as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous. There are many animals, who, though far from being large, are yet capable of raising ideas of the sublime, because they are considered as objects of terror. As serpents and poisonous animals of almost all kinds. And to things of great dimensions, if we annex an adventitious idea of terror, they become without comparison greater. A level plain of a vast extent on land, is certainly no mean idea; the prospect of such a plain may be as extensive as a prospect of the ocean; but can it ever fill the mind with anything so great as the ocean itself? This is owing to several causes; but it is owing to none more than this, that the ocean is an object of no small terror. Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime. Several languages bear a strong testimony to the affinity of these ideas. They frequently use the same word to signify indifferently the modes of astonishment or admiration and those of terror. [Greek: Thambos] is in Greek either fear or wonder; [Greek: deinos] is terrible or respectable; [Greek: ahideo], to reverence or to fear. Vereor in Latin is what [Greek: ahideo] is in Greek. The Romans used the verb stupeo, a term which strongly marks the state of an astonished mind, to express the effect either of simple fear, or of astonishment; the word attonitus (thunderstruck) is equally expressive of the alliance of these ideas; and do not the French étonnement, and the English astonishment and amazement, point out as clearly the kindred emotions which attend fear and wonder? They who have a more general knowledge of languages, could produce, I make no doubt, many other and equally striking examples.

from Obscurity

To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger, and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings. Those despotic governments which are founded on the passions of men, and principally upon the passion of fear, keep their chief as much as may

be from the public eye. The policy has been the same in many cases of religion. Almost all the heathen temples were dark. Even in the barbarous temples of the Americans at this day, they keep their idol in a dark part of the hut, which is consecrated to his worship. For this purpose too the Druids performed all their ceremonies in the bosom of the darkest woods, and in the shade of the oldest and most spreading oaks. No person seems better to have understood the secret of heightening, or of setting terrible things, if I may use the expression, in their strongest light, by the force of a judicious obscurity than Milton. His description of death in the second book is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp, with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and coloring, he has finished the portrait of the king of terrors:

> "The other shape,
>
> If shape it might be called that shape had none
>
> Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;
>
> Or substance might be called that shadow seemed;
>
> For each seemed either; black he stood as night;
>
> Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell;
>
> And shook a deadly dart. What seemed his head
>
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree.

from Power

Besides those things which directly suggest the idea of danger, and those which produce a similar effect from a mechanical cause, I know of nothing sublime, which is not some modification of power. And this branch rises, as naturally as the other two branches, from terror, the common stock of everything that is sublime.

...Look at a man, or any other animal of prodigious strength, and what is your idea before reflection? Is it that this strength will be subservient to you, to your ease, to your pleasure, to your interest in any sense? No; the emotion you feel is, lest this enormous strength should be employed to the purposes of[6] rapine and destruction. That power derives all its sublimity from the terror with which it is generally accompanied, will appear evidently from its effect in the very few cases, in which it may be possible to strip a considerable degree of strength of its ability to hurt. When you do this, you spoil it of everything sublime, and it immediately becomes contemptible. An ox is a creature of vast strength; but he is an innocent creature, extremely serviceable, and not at all dangerous; for which reason the idea of an ox is by no means grand. A bull is strong too; but his strength is of another kind; often very destructive, seldom

(at least amongst us) of any use in our business; the idea of a bull is therefore great, and it has frequently a place in sublime descriptions, and elevating comparisons. Let us look at another strong animal, in the two distinct lights in which we may consider him. The horse in the light of an useful beast, fit for the plough, the road, the draft; in every social useful light, the horse has nothing sublime; but is it thus that we are affected with him, whose neck is clothed with thunder, the glory of whose nostrils is terrible, who swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth that it is the sound of the trumpet? In this description, the useful character of the horse entirely disappears, and the terrible and sublime blaze out together.

...In short, wheresoever we find strength, and in what light soever we look upon power, we shall all along observe the sublime the concomitant of terror, and contempt the attendant on a strength that is subservient and innoxious. The race of dogs, in many of their kinds, have generally a competent degree of strength and swiftness; and they exert these and other valuable qualities which they possess, greatly to our convenience and pleasure. Dogs are indeed the most social, affectionate, and amiable animals of the whole brute creation; but love approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined; and accordingly, though we caress dogs, we borrow from them an appellation of the most despicable kind, when we employ terms of reproach; and this appellation is the common mark of the last vileness and contempt in every language.

from Infinity

Another source of the sublime is infinity; if it does not rather belong to the last. Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime. There are scarce any things which can become the objects of our senses, that are really and in their own nature infinite. But the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects as if they were really so. We are deceived in the like manner, if the parts of some large object are so continued to any indefinite number, that the imagination meets no check which may hinder its extending them at pleasure.

from Difficulty

Another source of greatness is difficulty. When any work seems to have required immense force and labor to effect it, the idea is grand. Stonehenge, neither for disposition nor ornament, has anything admirable; but those huge rude masses of stone, set on end, and piled each on other, turn the mind on the immense force necessary for such a work. Nay, the rudeness of the work increases this cause of grandeur, as it excludes the idea of art and contrivance; for dexterity produces another sort of effect, which is different enough from this.

from How Words influence the passions

Now, as words affect, not by any original power, but by representation, it might be supposed, that their influence over the passions° should be but light; yet it is quite otherwise; for we find by experience, that eloquence and poetry are as capable, nay indeed much more capable, of making deep and lively impressions than any other arts, and even than nature itself in very many cases. And this arises chiefly from these three causes. First, that we take an extraordinary part in the passions of others, and that we are easily affected and brought into sympathy by any tokens° which are shown of them; and there are no tokens which can express all the circumstances of most passions so fully as words; so that if a person speaks upon any subject, he can not only convey the subject to you, but likewise the manner in which he is himself affected by it. Certain it is, that the influence of most things on our passions is not so much from the things themselves, as from our opinions concerning them; and these again depend very much on the opinions of other men, conveyable for the most part by words only. Secondly, there are many things of a very affecting nature, which can seldom occur in the reality, but the words that represent them often do; and thus they have an opportunity of making a deep impression and taking root in the mind, whilst the idea of the reality was transient; and to some perhaps never really occurred in any shape, to whom it is notwithstanding very affecting, as war, death, famine, &c. Besides many ideas have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words, as God, angels, devils, heaven, and hell, all of which have however a great influence over the passions. Thirdly, by words we have it in our power to make such combinations as we cannot possibly do otherwise. By this power of combining we are able, by the addition of well-chosen circumstances, to give a new life and force to the simple object. In painting we may represent any fine figure we please; but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged: but what painting can furnish out anything so grand as the addition of one word, “the angel of the Lord "? It is true, I have here no clear idea; but these words affect the mind more than the sensible° image did; which is all I contend for. A picture of Priam dragged to the altar’s foot, and there murdered, if it were well executed, would undoubtedly be very moving; but there are very aggravating° circumstances, which it could never represent:

Sanguine foedantem quos ipse sacraverat ignes.

As a further instance, let us consider those lines of Milton, where he describes the travels of the fallen angels through their dismal habitation:

> “O’er many a dark and dreary vale
>
> They passed, and many a region dolorous;
>
> O’er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp;
>
> Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
>
> A universe of death.”

Here is displayed the force of union in

“Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades”

which yet would lose the greatest part of their effect, if they were not the

“Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades — of Death.”

This idea or this affection caused by a word, which nothing but a word could annex to the others, raises a very great degree of the sublime, and this sublime is raised yet higher by what follows, a “universe of death.” Here are again two ideas not presentable but by language, and an union of them great and amazing beyond conception; if they may properly be called ideas which present no distinct image to the mind; but still it will be difficult to conceive how words can move the passions° which belong to real objects, without representing these objects clearly. This is difficult to us, because we do not sufficiently distinguish, in our observations upon language, between a clear expression and a strong expression. These are frequently confounded with each other, though they are in reality extremely different. The former regards the understanding, the latter belongs to the passions. The one describes a thing as it is, the latter describes it as it is felt. Now, as there is a moving tone of voice, an impassioned countenance, an agitated gesture, which affect independently of the things about which they are exerted, so there are words, and certain dispositions of words, which being peculiarly devoted to passionate subjects, and always used by those who are under the influence of any passion, touch and move us more than those which far more clearly and distinctly express the subject-matter. We yield to sympathy what we refuse to description. The truth is, all verbal description, merely as naked description, though never so exact, conveys so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described, that it could scarcely have the smallest effect, if the speaker did not call in to his aid those modes of speech that mark a strong and lively feeling in himself. Then, by the contagion of our passions, we catch a fire already kindled in another, which probably might never have been struck out by the object described. Words, by strongly conveying the passions by those means which we have already mentioned, fully compensate for their weakness in other respects.

from *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole

Preface to the First Edition

The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear. The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of Christianity; but the language and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism. The style is the purest Italian.

If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the era of the first Crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards. There is no other circumstance in the work that can lead us to guess at the period in which the scene is laid: the names of

the actors are evidently fictitious, and probably disguised on purpose: yet the Spanish names of the domestics seem to indicate that this work was not composed until the establishment of the Arragonian Kings in Naples had made Spanish appellations familiar in that country. The beauty of the diction, and the zeal of the author (moderated, however, by singular judgment) concur to make me think that the date of the composition was little antecedent to that of the impression. Letters were then in their most flourishing state in Italy, and contributed to dispel the empire of superstition, at that time so forcibly attacked by the reformers. It is not unlikely that an artful priest might endeavour to turn their own arms on the innovators, and might avail himself of his abilities as an author to confirm the populace in their ancient errors and superstitions. If this was his view, he has certainly acted with signal address. Such a work as the following would enslave a hundred vulgar minds beyond half the books of controversy that have been written from the days of Luther to the present hour.

This solution of the author's motives is, however, offered as a mere conjecture. Whatever his views were, or whatever effects the execution of them might have, his work can only be laid before the public at present as a matter of entertainment. Even as such, some apology for it is necessary. Miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events, are exploded now even from romances. That was not the case when our author wrote; much less when the story itself is supposed to have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the manners of the times, who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them.

If this air of the miraculous is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal. Allow the possibility of the facts, and all the actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation. There is no bombast, no similes, flowers, digressions, or unnecessary descriptions. Everything tends directly to the catastrophe. Never is the reader's attention relaxed. The rules of the drama are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece. The characters are well drawn, and still better maintained. Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions.

Some persons may perhaps think the characters of the domestics too little serious for the general cast of the story; but besides their opposition to the principal personages, the art of the author is very observable in his conduct of the subalterns. They discover many passages essential to the story, which could not be well brought to light but by their naïveté and simplicity. In particular, the womanish terror and foibles of Bianca, in the last chapter, conduce essentially towards advancing the catastrophe.

It is natural for a translator to be prejudiced in favour of his adopted work. More impartial readers may not be so much struck with the beauties of this piece as I was. Yet I am not blind to my author's defects. I could wish he had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this: that "the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation." I doubt whether, in his time, any more than at present, ambition curbed its appetite of dominion from the dread of so remote a punishment. And yet this

moral is weakened by that less direct insinuation, that even such anathema may be diverted by devotion to St. Nicholas. Here the interest of the Monk plainly gets the better of the judgment of the author. However, with all its faults, I have no doubt but the English reader will be pleased with a sight of this performance. The piety that reigns throughout, the lessons of virtue that are inculcated, and the rigid purity of the sentiments, exempt this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable. Should it meet with the success I hope for, I may be encouraged to reprint the original Italian, though it will tend to depreciate my own labour. Our language falls far short of the charms of the Italian, both for variety and harmony. The latter is peculiarly excellent for simple narrative. It is difficult in English to relate without falling too low or rising too high; a fault obviously occasioned by the little care taken to speak pure language in common conversation. Every Italian or Frenchman of any rank piques himself on speaking his own tongue correctly and with choice. I cannot flatter myself with having done justice to my author in this respect: his style is as elegant as his conduct of the passions is masterly. It is a pity that he did not apply his talents to what they were evidently proper for—the theatre.

I will detain the reader no longer, but to make one short remark. Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe that the groundwork of the story is founded on truth. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design, to describe particular parts. "The chamber," says he, "on the right hand;" "the door on the left hand;" "the distance from the chapel to Conrad's apartment:" these and other passages are strong presumptions that the author had some certain building in his eye. Curious persons, who have leisure to employ in such researches, may possibly discover in the Italian writers the foundation on which our author has built. If a catastrophe, at all resembling that which he describes, is believed to have given rise to this work, it will contribute to interest the reader, and will make the "Castle of Otranto" a still more moving story.

Preface to Second Edition

The favourable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public, calls upon the author to explain the grounds on which he composed it. But, before he opens those motives, it is fit that he should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator. As diffidence of his own abilities and the novelty of the attempt, were the sole inducements to assume the disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excusable. He resigned the performance to the impartial judgement of the public; determined to let it perish in obscurity, if disproved; nor meaning to avow such a trifle, unless better judges should pronounce that he might own it without blush.

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if, in the latter species, Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances. The actions, sentiments,

and conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days, were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.

The author of the following pages thought it possible to reconcile the two kinds. Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak, and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. He had observed, that, in all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles, and witness to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character: whereas, in the productions of romantic story, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an absurd dialogue. The actors seem to lose their senses, the moment the laws of nature have lost their tone. As the public have applauded the attempt, the author must not say he was entirely unequal to the task he had undertaken: yet, if the new route he has struck out shall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he shall own, with pleasure and modesty, that he was sensible the plan was capable of receiving greater embellishments than his imagination, or conduct of the passions, could bestow on it.

With regard to the deportment of the domestics, on which I have touched in the former preface, I will beg leave to add a few words.—The simplicity of their behaviour, almost tending to excite smiles, which, at first, seems not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only improper, but was marked designedly in that manner. My rule was nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of the princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to, express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one and the naivete of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels, while delayed, by the coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors, from arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves that he has been artfully interested in, the depending event. But I had higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. The great master of nature, SHAKESPEARE, was the model I copied. Let me ask, if his tragedies of Hamlet and Julius Caesar would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the gravediggers, the fooleries of Polonius, and the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens, were omitted, or vested in heroics? Is not the eloquence of Antony, the nobler and affectedly-unaffected oration of Brutus, artificially exalted by the rude bursts of nature from the mouths of their auditors? These touches remind one of the Grecian sculptor, who, to convey the idea of a Colossus, within the dimensions of a seal, inserted a little boy measuring his thumb.

“No,” says Voltaire, in his edition of Corneille, “this mixture of buffoonery and solemnity is intolerable.”—Voltaire is a genius— but not of Shakespeare’s magnitude. Without recurring to disputable authority, I appeal from Voltaire to himself. I shall not avail myself of his former encomiums on our mighty poet; though the French critic has twice translated the same speech in Hamlet, some years ago in admiration, latterly in derision; and I am sorry to find that his judgment grows weaker when it ought to be farther

matured. But I shall make use of his own words, delivered on the general topic of the theatre, when he was neither thinking to recommend or decry Shakespeare's practice; consequently, at a moment when Voltaire was impartial. In the preface to his Enfant Prodigue, that exquisite piece, of which I declare my admiration, and which, should I live twenty years longer, I trust I shall never attempt to ridicule, he has these words, speaking of comedy (but equally applicable to tragedy, if tragedy is, as surely it ought to be, a picture of human life; nor can I conceive why occassional pleasantry ought more to be banished from the tragic scene than pathetic seriousness from the comic), "One sees there a mixture of the grave and the light, of the comic and the tragic; often even a single adventure exhibits all these contrasts. Nothing is more common than a house in which the father scolds, a girl occupied by her passions weeps, the son ridicules both, some relations take a differing part in the scene, etc. We do not infer from this that every comedy ought to have scenes of buffoonery and of gravity. Now there is gaiety, now seriousness, now a mixture. Then there are others in which tenderness moves one to tears. We must not exclude any type, and if I were asked which is the best I would answer, 'the one which is best made." Surely if comedy may be toute sérieuse, tragedy may now and then, soberly, be indulged in a smile. Who shall proscribe it? Shall the critic, who, in self-defence, declares, that no kind ought to be excluded from comedy, give laws to Shakespeare?

I am aware that the preface from whence I have quoted these passages does not stand in Monsieur de Voltaire's name, but in that of his editor; yet who doubts that the editor and the author were the same person? or where is the editor, who has so happily possessed himself of his author's style, and brilliant ease of argument? These passages were indubitably the genuine sentiments of that great writer. In his epistle to Maffei, prefixed to his Mérope, he delivers almost the same opinion, though, I doubt, with a little irony. I will repeat his words, and then give my reason for quoting them. After translating a passage in Maffei's Mérope, Monsieur de Voltaire adds, "All of these characteristics are naive. Everything is convenient to those who introduce the scene and to the customs that you give them. These natural familiarities would, I think, have been well received in Athens, but Paris and our nation prefer another type of subtlety." I doubt, I say, whether there is not a grain of sneer in this and other passages of that epistle; yet the force of truth is not damaged by being tinged with ridicule. Maffei was to represent a Grecian story: surely the Athenians were as competent judges of Grecian manners, and of the propriety of introducing them, as the parterre of Paris. "On the contrary," says Voltaire (and I cannot but admire his reasoning), "there were but ten thousand citizens at Athens and Paris has near eight hundred thousand inhabitants, among whom one may reckon thirty thousand judges of dramatic works."—indeed!—but allowing so numerous a tribunal, I believe this is the only instance in which it was ever pretended that thirty thousand persons, living near two thousand years after the era in question, were, upon the mere face of the poll, declared better judges than the Grecians themselves, of what ought to be the manners of a tragedy written on a Grecian story.

I will not enter into a discussion of the espèce de simplicité, which the parterre of Paris demands, nor of the shackles with which the thirty thousand judges have cramped their poetry, the chief merit of which,

as I gather from repeated passages in the New Commentary on Corneille, consists in vaulting in spite of those fetters; a merit which, if true, would reduce poetry from the lofty effort of imagination, to a puerile and most contemptible labour—difficiles nugae [hard doggerel] with witness! I cannot, however, help mentioning a couplet, which, to my English ears, always sounded as the flattest and most trifling instance of circumstantial propriety, but which Voltaire, who has dealt so severely with nine parts in ten of Corneille's works, has singled out to defend in Racine;

> De son appartement cette porte est prochaine,
>
> Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la Reine.

In English,

> To Cæsar's closet through this door you come.
>
> And t'other leads to the Queen's drawing-room.

Unhappy Shakespeare! hadst thou made Rosencrantz inform his compeer, Guildenstern, of the iconography of the palace of Copenhagen, instead of presenting us with a moral dialogue between the Prince of Denmark and the gravedigger, the illuminated pit of Paris would have been instructed a second time to adore thy talents.

The result of all I have said, is, to shelter my own daring under the canon of the brightest genius this country, at least, has produced. I might have pleaded that, having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: but I should be more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention, unless I could have marked my work with genius, as well as with originality. Such as it is, the public have honoured it sufficiently, whatever rank their suffrages allot to it.

Chapter I

Manfred, Prince of Otranto, had one son and one daughter: the latter, a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called Matilda. Conrad, the son, was three years younger, a homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never showed any symptoms of affection to Matilda. Manfred had contracted a marriage for his son with the Marquis of Vicenza's daughter, Isabella; and she had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of Manfred, that he might celebrate the wedding as soon as Conrad's infirm state of health would permit.

Manfred's impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former, indeed, apprehending the severity of their Prince's disposition, did not dare to utter their surmises on this precipitation. Hippolita, his wife, an amiable lady, did sometimes venture to represent the danger of marrying their only son so early, considering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but she never received any other answer than reflections on her own sterility, who had given him but one heir. His

tenants and subjects were less cautious in their discourses. They attributed this hasty wedding to the Prince's dread of seeing accomplished an ancient prophecy, which was said to have pronounced that the castle and lordship of Otranto "should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it." It was difficult to make any sense of this prophecy; and still less easy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in question. Yet these mysteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the less to their opinion.

Young Conrad's birthday was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the Castle, and everything ready for beginning the divine office, when Conrad himself was missing. Manfred, impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, despatched one of his attendants to summon the young Prince. The servant, who had not stayed long enough to have crossed the court to Conrad's apartment, came running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court.

The company were struck with terror and amazement. The Princess Hippolita, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. Manfred, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the courtyard; and at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out, "Oh! the helmet! the helmet!"

In the meantime, some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. Manfred, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself to get information of what occasioned this strange confusion. Matilda remained endeavouring to assist her mother, and Isabella stayed for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing that struck Manfred's eyes was a group of his servants endeavouring to raise something that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed without believing his sight.

"What are ye doing?" cried Manfred, wrathfully; "where is my son?"

A volley of voices replied, "Oh! my Lord! the Prince! the Prince! the helmet! the helmet!"

Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily,—but what a sight for a father's eyes!—he beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune had happened, and above all, the tremendous phenomenon before him, took away the Prince's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision; and seemed less attentive to his loss, than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned

it. He touched, he examined the fatal casque; nor could even the bleeding mangled remains of the young Prince divert the eyes of Manfred from the portent before him.

All who had known his partial fondness for young Conrad, were as much surprised at their Prince's insensibility, as thunderstruck themselves at the miracle of the helmet. They conveyed the disfigured corpse into the hall, without receiving the least direction from Manfred. As little was he attentive to the ladies who remained in the chapel. On the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy princesses, his wife and daughter, the first sounds that dropped from Manfred's lips were, "Take care of the Lady Isabella."

The domestics, without observing the singularity of this direction, were guided by their affection to their mistress, to consider it as peculiarly addressed to her situation, and flew to her assistance. They conveyed her to her chamber more dead than alive, and indifferent to all the strange circumstances she heard, except the death of her son.

Matilda, who doted on her mother, smothered her own grief and amazement, and thought of nothing but assisting and comforting her afflicted parent. Isabella, who had been treated by Hippolita like a daughter, and who returned that tenderness with equal duty and affection, was scarce less assiduous about the Princess; at the same time endeavouring to partake and lessen the weight of sorrow which she saw Matilda strove to suppress, for whom she had conceived the warmest sympathy of friendship. Yet her own situation could not help finding its place in her thoughts. She felt no concern for the death of young Conrad, except commiseration; and she was not sorry to be delivered from a marriage which had promised her little felicity, either from her destined bridegroom, or from the severe temper of Manfred, who, though he had distinguished her by great indulgence, had imprinted her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable princesses as Hippolita and Matilda.

While the ladies were conveying the wretched mother to her bed, Manfred remained in the court, gazing on the ominous casque, and regardless of the crowd which the strangeness of the event had now assembled around him. The few words he articulated, tended solely to inquiries, whether any man knew from whence it could have come? Nobody could give him the least information. However, as it seemed to be the sole object of his curiosity, it soon became so to the rest of the spectators, whose conjectures were as absurd and improbable, as the catastrophe itself was unprecedented. In the midst of their senseless guesses, a young peasant, whom rumour had drawn thither from a neighbouring village, observed that the miraculous helmet was exactly like that on the figure in black marble of Alfonso the Good, one of their former princes, in the church of St. Nicholas.

"Villain! What sayest thou?" cried Manfred, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the young man by the collar; "how darest thou utter such treason? Thy life shall pay for it."

The spectators, who as little comprehended the cause of the Prince's fury as all the rest they had seen, were at a loss to unravel this new circumstance. The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the Prince. Yet recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and

humility, he disengaged himself from Manfred's grip, and then with an obeisance, which discovered more jealousy of innocence than dismay, he asked, with respect, of what he was guilty? Manfred, more enraged at the vigour, however decently exerted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold, than appeased by his submission, ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms.

During this altercation, some of the vulgar spectators had run to the great church, which stood near the castle, and came back open-mouthed, declaring that the helmet was missing from Alfonso's statue. Manfred, at this news, grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he sought a subject on which to vent the tempest within him, he rushed again on the young peasant, crying—

"Villain! Monster! Sorcerer! 'tis thou hast done this! 'tis thou hast slain my son!"

The mob, who wanted some object within the scope of their capacities, on whom they might discharge their bewildered reasoning, caught the words from the mouth of their lord, and re-echoed—

"Ay, ay; 'tis he, 'tis he: he has stolen the helmet from good Alfonso's tomb, and dashed out the brains of our young Prince with it," never reflecting how enormous the disproportion was between the marble helmet that had been in the church, and that of steel before their eyes; nor how impossible it was for a youth seemingly not twenty, to wield a piece of armour of so prodigious a weight.

The folly of these ejaculations brought Manfred to himself: yet whether provoked at the peasant having observed the resemblance between the two helmets, and thereby led to the farther discovery of the absence of that in the church, or wishing to bury any such rumour under so impertinent a supposition, he gravely pronounced that the young man was certainly a necromancer, and that till the Church could take cognisance of the affair, he would have the Magician, whom they had thus detected, kept prisoner under the helmet itself, which he ordered his attendants to raise, and place the young man under it; declaring he should be kept there without food, with which his own infernal art might furnish him.

It was in vain for the youth to represent against this preposterous sentence: in vain did Manfred's friends endeavour to divert him from this savage and ill-grounded resolution. The generality were charmed with their lord's decision, which, to their apprehensions, carried great appearance of justice, as the Magician was to be punished by the very instrument with which he had offended: nor were they struck with the least compunction at the probability of the youth being starved, for they firmly believed that, by his diabolic skill, he could easily supply himself with nutriment.

Manfred thus saw his commands even cheerfully obeyed; and appointing a guard with strict orders to prevent any food being conveyed to the prisoner, he dismissed his friends and attendants, and retired to his own chamber, after locking the gates of the castle, in which he suffered none but his domestics to remain.

In the meantime, the care and zeal of the young Ladies had brought the Princess Hippolita to herself, who amidst the transports of her own sorrow frequently demanded news of her lord, would have dismissed her attendants to watch over him, and at last enjoined Matilda to leave her, and visit and comfort her father. Matilda, who wanted no affectionate duty to Manfred, though she trembled at his austerity, obeyed the orders of Hippolita, whom she tenderly recommended to Isabella; and inquiring of the domestics for her father, was informed that he was retired to his chamber, and had commanded that nobody should have admittance to him. Concluding that he was immersed in sorrow for the death of her brother, and fearing to renew his tears by the sight of his sole remaining child, she hesitated whether she should break in upon his affliction; yet solicitude for him, backed by the commands of her mother, encouraged her to venture disobeying the orders he had given; a fault she had never been guilty of before.

The gentle timidity of her nature made her pause for some minutes at his door. She heard him traverse his chamber backwards, and forwards with disordered steps; a mood which increased her apprehensions. She was, however, just going to beg admittance, when Manfred suddenly opened the door; and as it was now twilight, concurring with the disorder of his mind, he did not distinguish the person, but asked angrily, who it was? Matilda replied, trembling—

“My dearest father, it is I, your daughter.”

Manfred, stepping back hastily, cried, “Begone! I do not want a daughter;” and flinging back abruptly, clapped the door against the terrified Matilda.

She was too well acquainted with her father’s impetuosity to venture a second intrusion. When she had a little recovered the shock of so bitter a reception, she wiped away her tears to prevent the additional stab that the knowledge of it would give to Hippolita, who questioned her in the most anxious terms on the health of Manfred, and how he bore his loss. Matilda assured her he was well, and supported his misfortune with manly fortitude.

“But will he not let me see him?” said Hippolita mournfully; “will he not permit me to blend my tears with his, and shed a mother’s sorrows in the bosom of her Lord? Or do you deceive me, Matilda? I know how Manfred doted on his son: is not the stroke too heavy for him? has he not sunk under it? You do not answer me—alas! I dread the worst!—Raise me, my maidens; I will, I will see my Lord. Bear me to him instantly: he is dearer to me even than my children.”

Matilda made signs to Isabella to prevent Hippolita’s rising; and both those lovely young women were using their gentle violence to stop and calm the Princess, when a servant, on the part of Manfred, arrived and told Isabella that his Lord demanded to speak with her.

“With me!” cried Isabella.

“Go,” said Hippolita, relieved by a message from her Lord: “Manfred cannot support the sight of his own family. He thinks you less disordered than we are, and dreads the shock of my grief. Console him, dear

Isabella, and tell him I will smother my own anguish rather than add to his."

As it was now evening the servant who conducted Isabella bore a torch before her. When they came to Manfred, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he started, and said hastily—

"Take away that light, and begone."

Then shutting the door impetuously, he flung himself upon a bench against the wall, and bade Isabella sit by him. She obeyed trembling."I sent for you, Lady," said he—and then stopped under great appearance of confusion."My Lord!""Yes, I sent for you on a matter of great moment," resumed he. "Dry your tears, young Lady—you have lost your bridegroom. Yes, cruel fate! and I have lost the hopes of my race! But Conrad was not worthy of your beauty.""How, my Lord!" said Isabella; "sure you do not suspect me of not feeling the concern I ought: my duty and affection would have always—""Think no more of him," interrupted Manfred; "he was a sickly, puny child, and Heaven has perhaps taken him away, that I might not trust the honours of my house on so frail a foundation. The line of Manfred calls for numerous supports. My foolish fondness for that boy blinded the eyes of my prudence—but it is better as it is. I hope, in a few years, to have reason to rejoice at the death of Conrad."Words cannot paint the astonishment of Isabella. At first she apprehended that grief had disordered Manfred's understanding. Her next thought suggested that this strange discourse was designed to ensnare her: she feared that Manfred had perceived her indifference for his son: and in consequence of that idea she replied—

"Good my Lord, do not doubt my tenderness: my heart would have accompanied my hand. Conrad would have engrossed all my care; and wherever fate shall dispose of me, I shall always cherish his memory, and regard your Highness and the virtuous Hippolita as my parents."

"Curse on Hippolita!" cried Manfred. "Forget her from this moment, as I do. In short, Lady, you have missed a husband undeserving of your charms: they shall now be better disposed of. Instead of a sickly boy, you shall have a husband in the prime of his age, who will know how to value your beauties, and who may expect a numerous offspring."

"Alas, my Lord!" said Isabella, "my mind is too sadly engrossed by the recent catastrophe in your family to think of another marriage. If ever my father returns, and it shall be his pleasure, I shall obey, as I did when I consented to give my hand to your son: but until his return, permit me to remain under your hospitable roof, and employ the melancholy hours in assuaging yours, Hippolita's, and the fair Matilda's affliction."

"I desired you once before," said Manfred angrily, "not to name that woman: from this hour she must be a stranger to you, as she must be to me. In short, Isabella, since I cannot give you my son, I offer you myself."

"Heavens!" cried Isabella, waking from her delusion, "what do I hear? You! my Lord! You! My father-in-law! the father of Conrad! the husband of the virtuous and tender Hippolita!"

“I tell you,” said Manfred imperiously, “Hippolita is no longer my wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfruitfulness. My fate depends on having sons, and this night I trust will give a new date to my hopes.”

At those words he seized the cold hand of Isabella, who was half dead with fright and horror. She shrieked, and started from him, Manfred rose to pursue her, when the moon, which was now up, and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet, which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. Isabella, who gathered courage from her situation, and who dreaded nothing so much as Manfred’s pursuit of his declaration, cried—

“Look, my Lord! see, Heaven itself declares against your impious intentions!”

“Heaven nor Hell shall impede my designs,” said Manfred, advancing again to seize the Princess.

At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast.

Isabella, whose back was turned to the picture, saw not the motion, nor knew whence the sound came, but started, and said—

“Hark, my Lord! What sound was that?” and at the same time made towards the door.

Manfred, distracted between the flight of Isabella, who had now reached the stairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture, which began to move, had, however, advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its panel, and descend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air.

“Do I dream?” cried Manfred, returning; “or are the devils themselves in league against me? Speak, internal spectre! Or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou too conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for—” Ere he could finish the sentence, the vision sighed again, and made a sign to Manfred to follow him.

“Lead on!” cried Manfred; “I will follow thee to the gulf of perdition.”

The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right hand. Manfred accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped to with violence by an invisible hand. The Prince, collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burst open the door with his foot, but found that it resisted his utmost efforts.

“Since Hell will not satisfy my curiosity,” said Manfred, “I will use the human means in my power for preserving my race; Isabella shall not escape me.”

The lady, whose resolution had given way to terror the moment she had quitted Manfred, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase. There she stopped, not knowing whither to direct her steps, nor how to escape from the impetuosity of the Prince. The gates of the castle, she knew, were locked, and guards placed in the court. Should she, as her heart prompted her, go and prepare Hippolita for the cruel destiny that awaited her, she did not doubt but Manfred would seek her there, and that his violence would incite him to double the injury he meditated, without leaving room for them to avoid the impetuosity of his passions. Delay might give him time to reflect on the horrid measures he had conceived, or produce some circumstance in her favour, if she could—for that night, at least—avoid his odious purpose. Yet where conceal herself? How avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle?

As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred's violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her.

She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave, yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage in a place where her cries were not likely to draw anybody to her assistance. Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind. If Manfred knew where she was, he must have followed her. She was still in one of the cloisters, and the steps she had heard were too distinct to proceed from the way she had come. Cheered with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the Prince, she was going to advance, when a door that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently: but ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately on seeing the light.

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of Manfred soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the Prince's

order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing by what she could observe that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess's situation. Alone in so dismal a place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair.

At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form standing close against the wall.

She shrieked, believing it the ghost of her betrothed Conrad. The figure, advancing, said, in a submissive voice—

"Be not alarmed, Lady; I will not injure you."

Isabella, a little encouraged by the words and tone of voice of the stranger, and recollecting that this must be the person who had opened the door, recovered her spirits enough to reply—

"Sir, whoever you are, take pity on a wretched Princess, standing on the brink of destruction. Assist me to escape from this fatal castle, or in a few moments I may be made miserable for ever."

"Alas!" said the stranger, "what can I do to assist you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the castle, and want—"

"Oh!" said Isabella, hastily interrupting him; "help me but to find a trap-door that must be hereabout, and it is the greatest service you can do me, for I have not a minute to lose."

Saying a these words, she felt about on the pavement, and directed the stranger to search likewise, for a smooth piece of brass enclosed in one of the stones.

"That," said she, "is the lock, which opens with a spring, of which I know the secret. If we can find that, I may escape—if not, alas! courteous stranger, I fear I shall have involved you in my misfortunes: Manfred will suspect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his resentment."

“I value not my life,” said the stranger, “and it will be some comfort to lose it in trying to deliver you from his tyranny.”

“Generous youth,” said Isabella, “how shall I ever requite—”

As she uttered those words, a ray of moonshine, streaming through a cranny of the ruin above, shone directly on the lock they sought.

“Oh! transport!” said Isabella; “here is the trap-door!” and, taking out the key, she touched the spring, which, starting aside, discovered an iron ring. “Lift up the door,” said the Princess.

The stranger obeyed, and beneath appeared some stone steps descending into a vault totally dark.

“We must go down here,” said Isabella. “Follow me; dark and dismal as it is, we cannot miss our way; it leads directly to the church of St. Nicholas. But, perhaps,” added the Princess modestly, “you have no reason to leave the castle, nor have I farther occasion for your service; in a few minutes I shall be safe from Manfred’s rage—only let me know to whom I am so much obliged.”

“I will never quit you,” said the stranger eagerly, “until I have placed you in safety—nor think me, Princess, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care—”

The stranger was interrupted by a sudden noise of voices that seemed approaching, and they soon distinguished these words—

“Talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment.”

“Oh, heavens!” cried Isabella; “it is the voice of Manfred! Make haste, or we are ruined! and shut the trap-door after you.”

Saying this, she descended the steps precipitately; and as the stranger hastened to follow her, he let the door slip out of his hands: it fell, and the spring closed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having observed Isabella’s method of touching the spring; nor had he many moments to make an essay. The noise of the falling door had been heard by Manfred, who, directed by the sound, hastened thither, attended by his servants with torches.

“It must be Isabella,” cried Manfred, before he entered the vault. “She is escaping by the subterraneous passage, but she cannot have got far.”

What was the astonishment of the Prince when, instead of Isabella, the light of the torches discovered to him the young peasant whom he thought confined under the fatal helmet!

“Traitor!” said Manfred; “how camest thou here? I thought thee in durance above in the court.”

“I am no traitor,” replied the young man boldly, “nor am I answerable for your thoughts.”

“Presumptuous villain!” cried Manfred; “dost thou provoke my wrath? Tell me, how hast thou escaped from above? Thou hast corrupted thy guards, and their lives shall answer it.”

“My poverty,” said the peasant calmly, “will disculpate them: though the ministers of a tyrant’s wrath, to thee they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which you unjustly imposed upon them.”

“Art thou so hardy as to dare my vengeance?” said the Prince; “but tortures shall force the truth from thee. Tell me; I will know thy accomplices.”

“There was my accomplice!” said the youth, smiling, and pointing to the roof.

Manfred ordered the torches to be held up, and perceived that one of the cheeks of the enchanted casque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his servants had let it fall over the peasant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap, through which the peasant had pressed himself some minutes before he was found by Isabella.

“Was that the way by which thou didst descend?” said Manfred.

“It was,” said the youth.

“But what noise was that,” said Manfred, “which I heard as I entered the cloister?”

“A door clapped,” said the peasant; “I heard it as well as you.”

“What door?” said Manfred hastily.

“I am not acquainted with your castle,” said the peasant; “this is the first time I ever entered it, and this vault the only part of it within which I ever was.”

“But I tell thee,” said Manfred (wishing to find out if the youth had discovered the trap-door), “it was this way I heard the noise. My servants heard it too.”

“My Lord,” interrupted one of them officiously, “to be sure it was the trap-door, and he was going to make his escape.”

“Peace, blockhead!” said the Prince angrily; “if he was going to escape, how should he come on this side? I will know from his own mouth what noise it was I heard. Tell me truly; thy life depends on thy veracity.”

“My veracity is dearer to me than my life,” said the peasant; “nor would I purchase the one by forfeiting the other.”

“Indeed, young philosopher!” said Manfred contemptuously; “tell me, then, what was the noise I heard?”

“Ask me what I can answer,” said he, “and put me to death instantly if I tell you a lie.”

Manfred, growing impatient at the steady valour and indifference of the youth, cried—

“Well, then, thou man of truth, answer! Was it the fall of the trap-door that I heard?”

“It was,” said the youth.

“It was!” said the Prince; “and how didst thou come to know there was a trap-door here?”

“I saw the plate of brass by a gleam of moonshine,” replied he.

“But what told thee it was a lock?” said Manfred. “How didst thou discover the secret of opening it?”

“Providence, that delivered me from the helmet, was able to direct me to the spring of a lock,” said he.

“Providence should have gone a little farther, and have placed thee out of the reach of my resentment,” said Manfred. “When Providence had taught thee to open the lock, it abandoned thee for a fool, who did not know how to make use of its favours. Why didst thou not pursue the path pointed out for thy escape? Why didst thou shut the trap-door before thou hadst descended the steps?”

“I might ask you, my Lord,” said the peasant, “how I, totally unacquainted with your castle, was to know that those steps led to any outlet? but I scorn to evade your questions. Wherever those steps lead to, perhaps I should have explored the way—I could not be in a worse situation than I was. But the truth is, I let the trap-door fall: your immediate arrival followed. I had given the alarm—what imported it to me whether I was seized a minute sooner or a minute later?”

“Thou art a resolute villain for thy years,” said Manfred; “yet on reflection I suspect thou dost but trifle with me. Thou hast not yet told me how thou didst open the lock.”

“That I will show you, my Lord,” said the peasant; and, taking up a fragment of stone that had fallen from above, he laid himself on the trap-door, and began to beat on the piece of brass that covered it, meaning to gain time for the escape of the Princess. This presence of mind, joined to the frankness of the youth, staggered Manfred. He even felt a disposition towards pardoning one who had been guilty of no crime. Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason.

While the Prince was in this suspense, a confused noise of voices echoed through the distant vaults. As the sound approached, he distinguished the clamours of some of his domestics, whom he had dispersed through the castle in search of Isabella, calling out—

“Where is my Lord? where is the Prince?”

“Here I am,” said Manfred, as they came nearer; “have you found the Princess?”

The first that arrived, replied, “Oh, my Lord! I am glad we have found you.”

“Found me!” said Manfred; “have you found the Princess?”

“We thought we had, my Lord,” said the fellow, looking terrified, “but—”

“But, what?” cried the Prince; “has she escaped?”

“Jaquez and I, my Lord—”

“Yes, I and Diego,” interrupted the second, who came up in still greater consternation.

“Speak one of you at a time,” said Manfred; “I ask you, where is the Princess?”

“We do not know,” said they both together; “but we are frightened out of our wits.”

“So I think, blockheads,” said Manfred; “what is it has scared you thus?”

“Oh! my Lord,” said Jaquez, “Diego has seen such a sight! your Highness would not believe our eyes.”

“What new absurdity is this?” cried Manfred; “give me a direct answer, or, by Heaven—”

“Why, my Lord, if it please your Highness to hear me,” said the poor fellow, “Diego and I—”

“Yes, I and Jaquez—” cried his comrade.

“Did not I forbid you to speak both at a time?” said the Prince: “you, Jaquez, answer; for the other fool seems more distracted than thou art; what is the matter?”

“My gracious Lord,” said Jaquez, “if it please your Highness to hear me; Diego and I, according to your Highness’s orders, went to search for the young Lady; but being comprehensive that we might meet the ghost of my young Lord, your Highness’s son, God rest his soul, as he has not received Christian burial—”

“Sot!” cried Manfred in a rage; “is it only a ghost, then, that thou hast seen?”

“Oh! worse! worse! my Lord,” cried Diego: “I had rather have seen ten whole ghosts.”

“Grant me patience!” said Manfred; “these blockheads distract me. Out of my sight, Diego! and thou, Jaquez, tell me in one word, art thou sober? art thou raving? thou wast wont to have some sense: has the other sot frightened himself and thee too? Speak; what is it he fancies he has seen?”

“Why, my Lord,” replied Jaquez, trembling, “I was going to tell your Highness, that since the calamitous misfortune of my young Lord, God rest his precious soul! not one of us your Highness’s faithful servants—indeed we are, my Lord, though poor men—I say, not one of us has dared to set a foot about the castle, but two together: so Diego and I, thinking that my young Lady might be in the great gallery, went up there to look for her, and tell her your Highness wanted something to impart to her.”

“O blundering fools!” cried Manfred; “and in the meantime, she has made her escape, because you were afraid of goblins!—Why, thou knave! she left me in the gallery; I came from thence myself.”

“For all that, she may be there still for aught I know,” said Jaquez; “but the devil shall have me before I seek her there again—poor Diego! I do not believe he will ever recover it.”

“Recover what?” said Manfred; “am I never to learn what it is has terrified these rascals?—but I lose my time; follow me, slave; I will see if she is in the gallery.”

“For Heaven’s sake, my dear, good Lord,” cried Jaquez, “do not go to the gallery. Satan himself I believe is in the chamber next to the gallery.”

Manfred, who hitherto had treated the terror of his servants as an idle panic, was struck at this new circumstance. He recollected the apparition of the portrait, and the sudden closing of the door at the end of the gallery. His voice faltered, and he asked with disorder—

“What is in the great chamber?”

“My Lord,” said Jaquez, “when Diego and I came into the gallery, he went first, for he said he had more courage than I. So when we came into the gallery we found nobody. We looked under every bench and stool; and still we found nobody.”

“Were all the pictures in their places?” said Manfred.

“Yes, my Lord,” answered Jaquez; “but we did not think of looking behind them.”

“Well, well!” said Manfred; “proceed.”

“When we came to the door of the great chamber,” continued Jaquez, “we found it shut.”

“And could not you open it?” said Manfred.

“Oh! yes, my Lord; would to Heaven we had not!” replied he—“nay, it was not I neither; it was Diego: he was grown foolhardy, and would go on, though I advised him not—if ever I open a door that is shut again —”

“Trifle not,” said Manfred, shuddering, “but tell me what you saw in the great chamber on opening the door.”

“I! my Lord!” said Jaquez; “I was behind Diego; but I heard the noise.”

“Jaquez,” said Manfred, in a solemn tone of voice; “tell me, I adjure thee by the souls of my ancestors, what was it thou sawest? what was it thou heardest?”

“It was Diego saw it, my Lord, it was not I,” replied Jaquez; “I only heard the noise. Diego had no sooner opened the door, than he cried out, and ran back. I ran back too, and said, ‘Is it the ghost?’ ‘The ghost! no, no,’ said Diego, and his hair stood on end—‘it is a giant, I believe; he is all clad in armour, for I saw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet below in the court.’ As he said these words, my Lord, we heard a violent motion and the rattling of armour, as if the giant was rising, for Diego has told me since that he believes the giant was lying down, for the foot and leg were stretched at length on the floor. Before we could get to the end of the gallery, we heard the door of the great chamber clap behind us, but we did not dare turn back to see if the giant was following us—yet, now I think on it, we must have heard him if he had pursued us—but for Heaven’s sake, good my Lord, send for the chaplain, and have the castle exorcised, for, for certain, it is enchanted.”

“Ay, pray do, my Lord,” cried all the servants at once, “or we must leave your Highness’s service.”

“Peace, dotards!” said Manfred, “and follow me; I will know what all this means.”

“We! my Lord!” cried they with one voice; “we would not go up to the gallery for your Highness’s revenue.” The young peasant, who had stood silent, now spoke.

“Will your Highness,” said he, “permit me to try this adventure? My life is of consequence to nobody; I fear no bad angel, and have offended no good one.”

“Your behaviour is above your seeming,” said Manfred, viewing him with surprise and admiration —“hereafter I will reward your bravery—but now,” continued he with a sigh, “I am so circumstanced, that I dare trust no eyes but my own. However, I give you leave to accompany me.”

Manfred, when he first followed Isabella from the gallery, had gone directly to the apartment of his wife, concluding the Princess had retired thither. Hippolita, who knew his step, rose with anxious fondness to meet her Lord, whom she had not seen since the death of their son. She would have flown in a transport mixed of joy and grief to his bosom, but he pushed her rudely off, and said—

“Where is Isabella?”

“Isabella! my Lord!” said the astonished Hippolita.

“Yes, Isabella,” cried Manfred imperiously; “I want Isabella.”

“My Lord,” replied Matilda, who perceived how much his behaviour had shocked her mother,

“she has not been with us since your Highness summoned her to your apartment.”

“Tell me where she is,” said the Prince; “I do not want to know where she has been.”

“My good Lord,” says Hippolita, “your daughter tells you the truth: Isabella left us by your command, and has not returned since;—but, my good Lord, compose yourself: retire to your rest: this dismal day has

disordered you. Isabella shall wait your orders in the morning."

"What, then, you know where she is!" cried Manfred. "Tell me directly, for I will not lose an instant—and you, woman," speaking to his wife, "order your chaplain to attend me forthwith."

"Isabella," said Hippolita calmly, "is retired, I suppose, to her chamber: she is not accustomed to watch at this late hour. Gracious my Lord," continued she, "let me know what has disturbed you. Has Isabella offended you?"

"Trouble me not with questions," said Manfred, "but tell me where she is."

"Matilda shall call her," said the Princess. "Sit down, my Lord, and resume your wonted fortitude."

"What, art thou jealous of Isabella?" replied he, "that you wish to be present at our interview!"

"Good heavens! my Lord," said Hippolita, "what is it your Highness means?"

"Thou wilt know ere many minutes are passed," said the cruel Prince. "Send your chaplain to me, and wait my pleasure here."

At these words he flung out of the room in search of Isabella, leaving the amazed ladies thunderstruck with his words and frantic deportment, and lost in vain conjectures on what he was meditating.

Manfred was now returning from the vault, attended by the peasant and a few of his servants whom he had obliged to accompany him. He ascended the staircase without stopping till he arrived at the gallery, at the door of which he met Hippolita and her chaplain. When Diego had been dismissed by Manfred, he had gone directly to the Princess's apartment with the alarm of what he had seen. That excellent Lady, who no more than Manfred doubted of the reality of the vision, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the servant. Willing, however, to save her Lord from any additional shock, and prepared by a series of griefs not to tremble at any accession to it, she determined to make herself the first sacrifice, if fate had marked the present hour for their destruction. Dismissing the reluctant Matilda to her rest, who in vain sued for leave to accompany her mother, and attended only by her chaplain, Hippolita had visited the gallery and great chamber; and now with more serenity of soul than she had felt for many hours, she met her Lord, and assured him that the vision of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and no doubt an impression made by fear, and the dark and dismal hour of the night, on the minds of his servants. She and the chaplain had examined the chamber, and found everything in the usual order.

Manfred, though persuaded, like his wife, that the vision had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempest of mind into which so many strange events had thrown him. Ashamed, too, of his inhuman treatment of a Princess who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty, he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes; but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage, he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villainy.

Presuming on the unshaken submission of Hippolita, he flattered himself that she would not only acquiesce with patience to a divorce, but would obey, if it was his pleasure, in endeavouring to persuade Isabella to give him her hand—but ere he could indulge his horrid hope, he reflected that Isabella was not to be found. Coming to himself, he gave orders that every avenue to the castle should be strictly guarded, and charged his domestics on pain of their lives to suffer nobody to pass out. The young peasant, to whom he spoke favourably, he ordered to remain in a small chamber on the stairs, in which there was a pallet-bed, and the key of which he took away himself, telling the youth he would talk with him in the morning. Then dismissing his attendants, and bestowing a sullen kind of half-nod on Hippolita, he retired to his own chamber.

from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Anne Radcliffe

Chapter 26

> I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
> Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
> The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night.
> *MACBETH*

Emily was somewhat surprised, on the following day, to find that Annette had heard of Madame Montoni's confinement in the chamber over the portal, as well as of her purposed visit there, on the approaching night. That the circumstance, which Barnardine had so solemnly enjoined her to conceal, he had himself told to so indiscreet an hearer as Annette, appeared very improbable, though he had now charged her with a message, concerning the intended interview. He requested, that Emily would meet him, unattended, on the terrace, at a little after midnight, when he himself would lead her to the place he had promised; a proposal, from which she immediately shrunk, for a thousand vague fears darted athwart her mind, such as had tormented her on the preceding night, and which she neither knew how to trust, or to dismiss. It frequently occurred to her, that Barnardine might have deceived her, concerning Madame Montoni, whose murderer, perhaps, he really was; and that he had deceived her by order of Montoni, the more easily to draw her into some of the desperate designs of the latter. The terrible suspicion, that Madame Montoni no longer lived, thus came, accompanied by one not less dreadful for herself. Unless the crime, by which the aunt had suffered, was instigated merely by resentment, unconnected with profit, a motive, upon which Montoni did not appear very likely to act, its object must be unattained, till the niece was also dead, to whom Montoni knew that his wife's estates must descend. Emily remembered the words, which had informed her, that the contested estates in France would devolve to her, if Madame Montoni died, without consigning them to her husband, and the former obstinate perseverance of her aunt made it too probable, that she had, to the last, withheld them. At this instant, recollecting Barnardine's manner, on the preceding night, she now believed, what she had then fancied, that it expressed malignant triumph. She shuddered at the recollection, which confirmed her fears, and determined not to meet him on the terrace. Soon after, she was inclined to consider these

suspicions as the extravagant exaggerations of a timid and harassed mind, and could not believe Montoni liable to such preposterous depravity as that of destroying, from one motive, his wife and her niece. She blamed herself for suffering her romantic imagination to carry her so far beyond the bounds of probability, and determined to endeavour to check its rapid flights, lest they should sometimes extend into madness. Still, however, she shrunk from the thought of meeting Barnardine, on the terrace, at midnight; and still the wish to be relieved from this terrible suspense, concerning her aunt, to see her, and to sooth her sufferings, made her hesitate what to do.

'Yet how is it possible, Annette, I can pass to the terrace at that hour?' said she, recollecting herself, 'the sentinels will stop me, and Signor Montoni will hear of the affair.'

'O ma'amselle! that is well thought of,' replied Annette. 'That is what Barnardine told me about. He gave me this key, and bade me say it unlocks the door at the end of the vaulted gallery, that opens near the end of the east rampart, so that you need not pass any of the men on watch. He bade me say, too, that his reason for requesting you to come to the terrace was, because he could take you to the place you want to go to, without opening the great doors of the hall, which grate so heavily.'

Emily's spirits were somewhat calmed by this explanation, which seemed to be honestly given to Annette. 'But why did he desire I would come alone, Annette?' said she.

'Why that was what I asked him myself, ma'amselle. Says I, Why is my young lady to come alone? — Surely I may come with her! — What harm can I do? But he said "No — no — I tell you not," in his gruff way. Nay, says I, I have been trusted in as great affairs as this, I warrant, and it's a hard matter if *I* can't keep a secret now. Still he would say nothing but —"No — no — no." Well, says I, if you will only trust me, I will tell you a great secret, that was told me a month ago, and I have never opened my lips about it yet — so you need not be afraid of telling me. But all would not do. Then, ma'amselle, I went so far as to offer him a beautiful new sequin, that Ludovico gave me for a keep sake, and I would not have parted with it for all St. Marco's Place; but even that would not do! Now what can be the reason of this? But I know, you know, ma'am, who you are going to see.'

'Pray did Barnardine tell you this?'

'He! No, ma'amselle, that he did not.'

Emily enquired who did, but Annette shewed, that she COULD keep a secret.

During the remainder of the day, Emily's mind was agitated with doubts and fears and contrary determinations, on the subject of meeting this Barnardine on the rampart, and submitting herself to his guidance, she scarcely knew whither. Pity for her aunt and anxiety for herself alternately swayed her determination, and night came, before she had decided upon her conduct. She heard the castle clock strike eleven — twelve — and yet her mind wavered. The time, however, was now come, when she could hesitate no longer: and then the interest she felt for her aunt overcame other considerations, and, bidding

Annette follow her to the outer door of the vaulted gallery, and there await her return, she descended from her chamber. The castle was perfectly still, and the great hall, where so lately she had witnessed a scene of dreadful contention, now returned only the whispering footsteps of the two solitary figures gliding fearfully between the pillars, and gleamed only to the feeble lamp they carried. Emily, deceived by the long shadows of the pillars and by the catching lights between, often stopped, imagining she saw some person, moving in the distant obscurity of the perspective; and, as she passed these pillars, she feared to turn her eyes toward them, almost expecting to see a figure start out from behind their broad shaft. She reached, however, the vaulted gallery, without interruption, but unclosed its outer door with a trembling hand, and, charging Annette not to quit it and to keep it a little open, that she might be heard if she called, she delivered to her the lamp, which she did not dare to take herself because of the men on watch, and, alone, stepped out upon the dark terrace. Every thing was so still, that she feared, lest her own light steps should be heard by the distant sentinels, and she walked cautiously towards the spot, where she had before met Barnardine, listening for a sound, and looking onward through the gloom in search of him. At length, she was startled by a deep voice, that spoke near her, and she paused, uncertain whether it was his, till it spoke again, and she then recognized the hollow tones of Barnardine, who had been punctual to the moment, and was at the appointed place, resting on the rampart wall. After chiding her for not coming sooner, and saying, that he had been waiting nearly half an hour, he desired Emily, who made no reply, to follow him to the door, through which he had entered the terrace.

While he unlocked it, she looked back to that she had left, and, observing the rays of the lamp stream through a small opening, was certain, that Annette was still there. But her remote situation could little befriend Emily, after she had quitted the terrace; and, when Barnardine unclosed the gate, the dismal aspect of the passage beyond, shewn by a torch burning on the pavement, made her shrink from following him alone, and she refused to go, unless Annette might accompany her. This, however, Barnardine absolutely refused to permit, mingling at the same time with his refusal such artful circumstances to heighten the pity and curiosity of Emily towards her aunt, that she, at length, consented to follow him alone to the portal.

He then took up the torch, and led her along the passage, at the extremity of which he unlocked another door, whence they descended, a few steps, into a chapel, which, as Barnardine held up the torch to light her, Emily observed to be in ruins, and she immediately recollected a former conversation of Annette, concerning it, with very unpleasant emotions. She looked fearfully on the almost roofless walls, green with damps, and on the gothic points of the windows, where the ivy and the briony had long supplied the place of glass, and ran mantling among the broken capitals of some columns, that had once supported the roof. Barnardine stumbled over the broken pavement, and his voice, as he uttered a sudden oath, was returned in hollow echoes, that made it more terrific. Emily's heart sunk; but she still followed him, and he turned out of what had been the principal aisle of the chapel. 'Down these steps, lady,' said Barnardine, as he descended a flight, which appeared to lead into the vaults; but Emily paused on the top, and demanded, in a tremulous tone, whither he was conducting her.

‘To the portal,’ said Barnardine.

‘Cannot we go through the chapel to the portal?’ said Emily.

‘No, Signora, that leads to the inner court, which I don’t choose to unlock. This way, and we shall reach the outer court presently.’

Emily still hesitated; fearing not only to go on, but, since she had gone thus far, to irritate Barnardine by refusing to go further.

‘Come, lady,’ said the man, who had nearly reached the bottom of the flight, ‘make a little haste; I cannot wait here all night.’

‘Whither do these steps lead?’ said Emily, yet pausing.

‘To the portal,’ repeated Barnardine, in an angry tone, ‘I will wait no longer.’ As he said this, he moved on with the light, and Emily, fearing to provoke him by further delay, reluctantly followed. From the steps, they proceeded through a passage, adjoining the vaults, the walls of which were dropping with unwholesome dews, and the vapours, that crept along the ground, made the torch burn so dimly, that Emily expected every moment to see it extinguished, and Barnardine could scarcely find his way. As they advanced, these vapours thickened, and Barnardine, believing the torch was expiring, stopped for a moment to trim it. As he then rested against a pair of iron gates, that opened from the passage, Emily saw, by uncertain flashes of light, the vaults beyond, and, near her, heaps of earth, that seemed to surround an open grave. Such an object, in such a scene, would, at any time, have disturbed her; but now she was shocked by an instantaneous presentiment, that this was the grave of her unfortunate aunt, and that the treacherous Barnardine was leading herself to destruction. The obscure and terrible place, to which he had conducted her, seemed to justify the thought; it was a place suited for murder, a receptacle for the dead, where a deed of horror might be committed, and no vestige appear to proclaim it. Emily was so overwhelmed with terror, that, for a moment, she was unable to determine what conduct to pursue. She then considered, that it would be vain to attempt an escape from Barnardine, by flight, since the length and the intricacy of the way she had passed would soon enable him to overtake her, who was unacquainted with the turnings, and whose feebleness would not suffer her to run long with swiftness. She feared equally to irritate him by a disclosure of her suspicions, which a refusal to accompany him further certainly would do; and, since she was already as much in his power as it was possible she could be, if she proceeded, she, at length, determined to suppress, as far as she could, the appearance of apprehension, and to follow silently whither he designed to lead her. Pale with horror and anxiety, she now waited till Barnardine had trimmed the torch, and, as her sight glanced again upon the grave, she could not forbear enquiring, for whom it was prepared. He took his eyes from the torch, and fixed them upon her face without speaking. She faintly repeated the question, but the man, shaking the torch, passed on; and she followed, trembling, to a second flight of steps, having ascended which, a door delivered them into the first court of the castle. As they crossed it, the light shewed the high black walls around them,

fringed with long grass and dank weeds, that found a scanty soil among the mouldering stones; the heavy buttresses, with, here and there, between them, a narrow grate, that admitted a freer circulation of air to the court, the massy iron gates, that led to the castle, whose clustering turrets appeared above, and, opposite, the huge towers and arch of the portal itself. In this scene the large, uncouth person of Barnardine, bearing the torch, formed a characteristic figure. This Barnardine was wrapt in a long dark cloak, which scarcely allowed the kind of half-boots, or sandals, that were laced upon his legs, to appear, and shewed only the point of a broad sword, which he usually wore, slung in a belt across his shoulders. On his head was a heavy flat velvet cap, somewhat resembling a turban, in which was a short feather; the visage beneath it shewed strong features, and a countenance furrowed with the lines of cunning and darkened by habitual discontent.

The view of the court, however, reanimated Emily, who, as she crossed silently towards the portal, began to hope, that her own fears, and not the treachery of Barnardine, had deceived her. She looked anxiously up at the first casement, that appeared above the lofty arch of the portcullis; but it was dark, and she enquired, whether it belonged to the chamber, where Madame Montoni was confined. Emily spoke low, and Barnardine, perhaps, did not hear her question, for he returned no answer; and they, soon after, entered the postern door of the gate-way, which brought them to the foot of a narrow stair-case, that wound up one of the towers.

'Up this stair-case the Signora lies,' said Barnardine.

'Lies!' repeated Emily faintly, as she began to ascend.

'She lies in the upper chamber,' said Barnardine.

As they passed up, the wind, which poured through the narrow cavities in the wall, made the torch flare, and it threw a stronger gleam upon the grim and sallow countenance of Barnardine, and discovered more fully the desolation of the place — the rough stone walls, the spiral stairs, black with age, and a suit of antient armour, with an iron visor, that hung upon the walls, and appeared a trophy of some former victory.

Having reached a landing-place, 'You may wait here, lady,' said he, applying a key to the door of a chamber, 'while I go up, and tell the Signora you are coming.'

'That ceremony is unnecessary,' replied Emily, 'my aunt will rejoice to see me.'

'I am not so sure of that,' said Barnardine, pointing to the room he had opened: 'Come in here, lady, while I step up.'

Emily, surprised and somewhat shocked, did not dare to oppose him further, but, as he was turning away with the torch, desired he would not leave her in darkness. He looked around, and, observing a tripod lamp, that stood on the stairs, lighted and gave it to Emily, who stepped forward into a large old chamber,

and he closed the door. As she listened anxiously to his departing steps, she thought he descended, instead of ascending, the stairs; but the gusts of wind, that whistled round the portal, would not allow her to hear distinctly any other sound. Still, however, she listened, and, perceiving no step in the room above, where he had affirmed Madame Montoni to be, her anxiety increased, though she considered, that the thickness of the floor in this strong building might prevent any sound reaching her from the upper chamber. The next moment, in a pause of the wind, she distinguished Barnardine's step descending to the court, and then thought she heard his voice; but, the rising gust again overcoming other sounds, Emily, to be certain on this point, moved softly to the door, which, on attempting to open it, she discovered was fastened. All the horrid apprehensions, that had lately assailed her, returned at this instant with redoubled force, and no longer appeared like the exaggerations of a timid spirit, but seemed to have been sent to warn her of her fate. She now did not doubt, that Madame Montoni had been murdered, perhaps in this very chamber; or that she herself was brought hither for the same purpose. The countenance, the manners and the recollected words of Barnardine, when he had spoken of her aunt, confirmed her worst fears. For some moments, she was incapable of considering of any means, by which she might attempt an escape. Still she listened, but heard footsteps neither on the stairs, or in the room above; she thought, however, that she again distinguished Barnardine's voice below, and went to a grated window, that opened upon the court, to enquire further. Here, she plainly heard his hoarse accents, mingling with the blast, that swept by, but they were lost again so quickly, that their meaning could not be interpreted; and then the light of a torch, which seemed to issue from the portal below, flashed across the court, and the long shadow of a man, who was under the arch-way, appeared upon the pavement. Emily, from the hugeness of this sudden portrait, concluded it to be that of Barnardine; but other deep tones, which passed in the wind, soon convinced her he was not alone, and that his companion was not a person very liable to pity.

When her spirits had overcome the first shock of her situation, she held up the lamp to examine, if the chamber afforded a possibility of an escape. It was a spacious room, whose walls, wainscoted with rough oak, shewed no casement but the grated one, which Emily had left, and no other door than that, by which she had entered. The feeble rays of the lamp, however, did not allow her to see at once its full extent; she perceived no furniture, except, indeed, an iron chair, fastened in the centre of the chamber, immediately over which, depending on a chain from the ceiling, hung an iron ring. Having gazed upon these, for some time, with wonder and horror, she next observed iron bars below, made for the purpose of confining the feet, and on the arms of the chair were rings of the same metal. As she continued to survey them, she concluded, that they were instruments of torture, and it struck her, that some poor wretch had once been fastened in this chair, and had there been starved to death. She was chilled by the thought; but, what was her agony, when, in the next moment, it occurred to her, that her aunt might have been one of these victims, and that she herself might be the next! An acute pain seized her head, she was scarcely able to hold the lamp, and, looking round for support, was seating herself, unconsciously, in the iron chair itself; but suddenly perceiving where she was, she started from it in horror, and sprung towards a remote end of the room. Here again she looked round for a seat to sustain her, and perceived only a dark curtain, which,

descending from the ceiling to the floor, was drawn along the whole side of the chamber. Ill as she was, the appearance of this curtain struck her, and she paused to gaze upon it, in wonder and apprehension.

It seemed to conceal a recess of the chamber; she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled: twice she was withheld by a recollection of the terrible spectacle her daring hand had formerly unveiled in an apartment of the castle, till, suddenly conjecturing, that it concealed the body of her murdered aunt, she seized it, in a fit of desperation, and drew it aside. Beyond, appeared a corpse, stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood, as was the floor beneath. The features, deformed by death, were ghastly and horrible, and more than one livid wound appeared in the face. Emily, bending over the body, gazed, for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye; but, in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless at the foot of the couch.

When her senses returned, she found herself surrounded by men, among whom was Barnardine, who were lifting her from the floor, and then bore her along the chamber. She was sensible of what passed, but the extreme languor of her spirits did not permit her to speak, or move, or even to feel any distinct fear. They carried her down the stair- case, by which she had ascended; when, having reached the arch-way, they stopped, and one of the men, taking the torch from Barnardine, opened a small door, that was cut in the great gate, and, as he stepped out upon the road, the light he bore shewed several men on horseback, in waiting. Whether it was the freshness of the air, that revived Emily, or that the objects she now saw roused the spirit of alarm, she suddenly spoke, and made an ineffectual effort to disengage herself from the grasp of the ruffians, who held her.

Barnardine, meanwhile, called loudly for the torch, while distant voices answered, and several persons approached, and, in the same instant, a light flashed upon the court of the castle. Again he vociferated for the torch, and the men hurried Emily through the gate. At a short distance, under the shelter of the castle walls, she perceived the fellow, who had taken the light from the porter, holding it to a man, busily employed in altering the saddle of a horse, round which were several horsemen, looking on, whose harsh features received the full glare of the torch; while the broken ground beneath them, the opposite walls, with the tufted shrubs, that overhung their summits, and an embattled watch-tower above, were reddened with the gleam, which, fading gradually away, left the remoter ramparts and the woods below to the obscurity of night.

'What do you waste time for, there?' said Barnardine with an oath, as he approached the horsemen. 'Dispatch — dispatch!'

'The saddle will be ready in a minute,' replied the man who was buckling it, at whom Barnardine now swore again, for his negligence, and Emily, calling feebly for help, was hurried towards the horses, while the ruffians disputed on which to place her, the one designed for her not being ready. At this moment a cluster of lights issued from the great gates, and she immediately heard the shrill voice of Annette above those of several other persons, who advanced. In the same moment, she distinguished Montoni and Cavigni, followed by a number of ruffian-faced fellows, to whom she no longer looked with terror, but

with hope, for, at this instant, she did not tremble at the thought of any dangers, that might await her within the castle, whence so lately, and so anxiously she had wished to escape. Those, which threatened her from without, had engrossed all her apprehensions.

A short contest ensued between the parties, in which that of Montoni, however, were presently victors, and the horsemen, perceiving that numbers were against them, and being, perhaps, not very warmly interested in the affair they had undertaken, galloped off, while Barnardine had run far enough to be lost in the darkness, and Emily was led back into the castle. As she re-passed the courts, the remembrance of what she had seen in the portal-chamber came, with all its horror, to her mind; and when, soon after, she heard the gate close, that shut her once more within the castle walls, she shuddered for herself, and, almost forgetting the danger she had escaped, could scarcely think, that any thing less precious than liberty and peace was to be found beyond them.

Montoni ordered Emily to await him in the cedar parlour, whither he soon followed, and then sternly questioned her on this mysterious affair. Though she now viewed him with horror, as the murderer of her aunt, and scarcely knew what she said in reply to his impatient enquiries, her answers and her manner convinced him, that she had not taken a voluntary part in the late scheme, and he dismissed her upon the appearance of his servants, whom he had ordered to attend, that he might enquire further into the affair, and discover those, who had been accomplices in it.

Emily had been some time in her apartment, before the tumult of her mind allowed her to remember several of the past circumstances. Then, again, the dead form, which the curtain in the portal-chamber had disclosed, came to her fancy, and she uttered a groan, which terrified Annette the more, as Emily forbore to satisfy her curiosity, on the subject of it, for she feared to trust her with so fatal a secret, lest her indiscretion should call down the immediate vengeance of Montoni on herself.

Thus compelled to bear within her own mind the whole horror of the secret, that oppressed it, her reason seemed to totter under the intolerable weight. She often fixed a wild and vacant look on Annette, and, when she spoke, either did not hear her, or answered from the purpose. Long fits of abstraction succeeded; Annette spoke repeatedly, but her voice seemed not to make any impression on the sense of the long agitated Emily, who sat fixed and silent, except that, now and then, she heaved a heavy sigh, but without tears.

Terrified at her condition, Annette, at length, left the room, to inform Montoni of it, who had just dismissed his servants, without having made any discoveries on the subject of his enquiry. The wild description, which this girl now gave of Emily, induced him to follow her immediately to the chamber.

At the sound of his voice, Emily turned her eyes, and a gleam of recollection seemed to shoot athwart her mind, for she immediately rose from her seat, and moved slowly to a remote part of the room. He spoke to her in accents somewhat softened from their usual harshness, but she regarded him with a kind of half

curious, half terrified look, and answered only 'yes,' to whatever he said. Her mind still seemed to retain no other impression, than that of fear.

Of this disorder Annette could give no explanation, and Montoni, having attempted, for some time, to persuade Emily to talk, retired, after ordering Annette to remain with her, during the night, and to inform him, in the morning, of her condition.

When he was gone, Emily again came forward, and asked who it was, that had been there to disturb her. Annette said it was the Signor- Signor Montoni. Emily repeated the name after her, several times, as if she did not recollect it, and then suddenly groaned, and relapsed into abstraction.

With some difficulty, Annette led her to the bed, which Emily examined with an eager, frenzied eye, before she lay down, and then, pointing, turned with shuddering emotion, to Annette, who, now more terrified, went towards the door, that she might bring one of the female servants to pass the night with them; but Emily, observing her going, called her by name, and then in the naturally soft and plaintive tone of her voice, begged, that she, too, would not forsake her. — —'For since my father died,' added she, sighing, 'every body forsakes me.'

'Your father, ma'amselle!' said Annette, 'he was dead before you knew me.'

'He was, indeed!' rejoined Emily, and her tears began to flow. She now wept silently and long, after which, becoming quite calm, she at length sunk to sleep, Annette having had discretion enough not to interrupt her tears. This girl, as affectionate as she was simple, lost in these moments all her former fears of remaining in the chamber, and watched alone by Emily, during the whole night.

from *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis

Volume III, Chapter V

> ——He was a fell despightful Fiend:
> Hell holds none worse in baleful bower below:
> By pride, and wit, and rage, and rancor keened;
> Of Man alike, if good or bad the Foe.
> Thomson.

On the day following Antonia's death, all Madrid was a scene of consternation and amazement. An Archer who had witnessed the adventure in the Sepulchre had indiscreetly related the circumstances of the murder: He had also named the Perpetrator. The confusion was without example which this intelligence raised among the Devotees. Most of them disbelieved it, and went themselves to the Abbey to ascertain the fact. Anxious to avoid the shame to which their Superior's ill-conduct exposed the whole Brotherhood, the Monks assured the Visitors that Ambrosio was prevented from receiving them as usual by nothing but illness. This attempt was unsuccessful: The same excuse being repeated day after day, the Archer's story

gradually obtained confidence. His Partizans abandoned him: No one entertained a doubt of his guilt; and they who before had been the warmest in his praise were now the most vociferous in his condemnation.

While his innocence or guilt was debated in Madrid with the utmost acrimony, Ambrosio was a prey to the pangs of conscious villainy, and the terrors of punishment impending over him. When He looked back to the eminence on which He had lately stood, universally honoured and respected, at peace with the world and with himself, scarcely could He believe that He was indeed the culprit whose crimes and whose fate He trembled to envisage. But a few weeks had elapsed, since He was pure and virtuous, courted by the wisest and noblest in Madrid, and regarded by the People with a reverence that approached idolatry: He now saw himself stained with the most loathed and monstrous sins, the object of universal execration, a Prisoner of the Holy Office, and probably doomed to perish in tortures the most severe. He could not hope to deceive his Judges: The proofs of his guilt were too strong. His being in the Sepulchre at so late an hour, his confusion at the discovery, the dagger which in his first alarm He owned had been concealed by him, and the blood which had spirted upon his habit from Antonia's wound, sufficiently marked him out for the Assassin. He waited with agony for the day of examination: He had no resource to comfort him in his distress. Religion could not inspire him with fortitude: If He read the Books of morality which were put into his hands, He saw in them nothing but the enormity of his offences; If he attempted to pray, He recollected that He deserved not heaven's protection, and believed his crimes so monstrous as to baffle even God's infinite goodness. For every other Sinner He thought there might be hope, but for him there could be none. Shuddering at the past, anguished by the present, and dreading the future, thus passed He the few days preceding that which was marked for his Trial.

That day arrived. At nine in the morning his prison door was unlocked, and his Gaoler entering, commanded him to follow him. He obeyed with trembling. He was conducted into a spacious Hall, hung with black cloth. At the Table sat three grave, stern-looking Men, also habited in black: One was the Grand Inquisitor, whom the importance of this cause had induced to examine into it himself. At a smaller table at a little distance sat the Secretary, provided with all necessary implements for writing. Ambrosio was beckoned to advance, and take his station at the lower end of the Table. As his eye glanced downwards, He perceived various iron instruments lying scattered upon the floor. Their forms were unknown to him, but apprehension immediately guessed them to be engines of torture. He turned pale, and with difficulty prevented himself from sinking upon the ground.

Profound silence prevailed, except when the Inquisitors whispered a few words among themselves mysteriously. Near an hour past away, and with every second of it Ambrosio's fears grew more poignant. At length a small Door, opposite to that by which He had entered the Hall, grated heavily upon its hinges. An Officer appeared, and was immediately followed by the beautiful Matilda. Her hair hung about her face wildly; Her cheeks were pale, and her eyes sunk and hollow. She threw a melancholy look upon Ambrosio: He replied by one of aversion and reproach. She was placed opposite to him. A Bell then sounded thrice. It was the signal for opening the Court, and the Inquisitors entered upon their office.

In these trials neither the accusation is mentioned, or the name of the Accuser. The Prisoners are only asked, whether they will confess: If they reply that having no crime they can make no confession, they are put to the torture without delay. This is repeated at intervals, either till the suspected avow themselves culpable, or the perseverance of the examinants is worn out and exhausted: But without a direct acknowledgment of their guilt, the Inquisition never pronounces the final doom of its Prisoners.

In general much time is suffered to elapse without their being questioned: But Ambrosio's trial had been hastened, on account of a solemn Auto da Fe which would take place in a few days, and in which the Inquisitors meant this distinguished Culprit to perform a part, and give a striking testimony of their vigilance.

The Abbot was not merely accused of rape and murder: The crime of Sorcery was laid to his charge, as well as to Matilda's. She had been seized as an Accomplice in Antonia's assassination. On searching her Cell, various suspicious books and instruments were found which justified the accusation brought against her. To criminate the Monk, the constellated Mirror was produced, which Matilda had accidentally left in his chamber. The strange figures engraved upon it caught the attention of Don Ramirez, while searching the Abbot's Cell: In consequence, He carried it away with him. It was shown to the Grand Inquisitor, who having considered it for some time, took off a small golden Cross which hung at his girdle, and laid it upon the Mirror. Instantly a loud noise was heard, resembling a clap of thunder, and the steel shivered into a thousand pieces. This circumstance confirmed the suspicion of the Monk's having dealt in Magic: It was even supposed that his former influence over the minds of the People was entirely to be ascribed to witchcraft.

Determined to make him confess not only the crimes which He had committed, but those also of which He was innocent, the Inquisitors began their examination. Though dreading the tortures, as He dreaded death still more which would consign him to eternal torments, the Abbot asserted his purity in a voice bold and resolute. Matilda followed his example, but spoke with fear and trembling. Having in vain exhorted him to confess, the Inquisitors ordered the Monk to be put to the question. The Decree was immediately executed. Ambrosio suffered the most excruciating pangs that ever were invented by human cruelty: Yet so dreadful is Death when guilt accompanies it, that He had sufficient fortitude to persist in his disavowal. His agonies were redoubled in consequence: Nor was He released till fainting from excess of pain, insensibility rescued him from the hands of his Tormentors.

Matilda was next ordered to the torture: But terrified by the sight of the Friar's sufferings, her courage totally deserted her. She sank upon her knees, acknowledged her corresponding with infernal Spirits, and that She had witnessed the Monk's assassination of Antonia: But as to the crime of Sorcery, She declared herself the sole criminal, and Ambrosio perfectly innocent. The latter assertion met with no credit. The Abbot had recovered his senses in time to hear the confession of his Accomplice: But He was too much enfeebled by what He had already undergone to be capable at that time of sustaining new torments.

He was commanded back to his Cell, but first informed that as soon as He had gained strength sufficient, He must prepare himself for a second examination. The Inquisitors hoped that He would then be less hardened and obstinate. To Matilda it was announced that She must expiate her crime in fire on the approaching Auto da Fe. All her tears and entreaties could procure no mitigation of her doom, and She was dragged by force from the Hall of Trial.

Returned to his dungeon, the sufferings of Ambrosio's body were far more supportable than those of his mind. His dislocated limbs, the nails torn from his hands and feet, and his fingers mashed and broken by the pressure of screws, were far surpassed in anguish by the agitation of his soul and vehemence of his terrors. He saw that, guilty or innocent, his Judges were bent upon condemning him: The remembrance of what his denial had already cost him terrified him at the idea of being again applied to the question, and almost engaged him to confess his crimes. Then again the consequences of his confession flashed before him, and rendered him once more irresolute. His death would be inevitable, and that a death the most dreadful: He had listened to Matilda's doom, and doubted not that a similar was reserved for him. He shuddered at the approaching Auto da Fe, at the idea of perishing in flames, and only escaping from indurable torments to pass into others more subtile and ever-lasting! With affright did He bend his mind's eye on the space beyond the grave; nor could hide from himself how justly he ought to dread Heaven's vengeance. In this Labyrinth of terrors, fain would He have taken his refuge in the gloom of Atheism: Fain would He have denied the soul's immortality; have persuaded himself that when his eyes once closed, they would never more open, and that the same moment would annihilate his soul and body. Even this resource was refused to him. To permit his being blind to the fallacy of this belief, his knowledge was too extensive, his understanding too solid and just. He could not help feeling the existence of a God. Those truths, once his comfort, now presented themselves before him in the clearest light; But they only served to drive him to distraction. They destroyed his ill-grounded hopes of escaping punishment; and dispelled by the irresistible brightness of Truth and convinction, Philosophy's deceitful vapours faded away like a dream.

In anguish almost too great for mortal frame to bear, He expected the time when He was again to be examined. He busied himself in planning ineffectual schemes for escaping both present and future punishment. Of the first there was no possibility; Of the second Despair made him neglect the only means. While Reason forced him to acknowledge a God's existence, Conscience made him doubt the infinity of his goodness. He disbelieved that a Sinner like him could find mercy. He had not been deceived into error: Ignorance could furnish him with no excuse. He had seen vice in her true colours; Before He committed his crimes, He had computed every scruple of their weight; and yet he had committed them.

'Pardon?' He would cry in an access of phrenzy 'Oh! there can be none for me!'

Persuaded of this, instead of humbling himself in penitence, of deploring his guilt, and employing his few remaining hours in deprecating Heaven's wrath, He abandoned himself to the transports of desperate rage; He sorrowed for the punishment of his crimes, not their commission; and exhaled his bosom's

anguish in idle sighs, in vain lamentations, in blasphemy and despair. As the few beams of day which pierced through the bars of his prison window gradually disappeared, and their place was supplied by the pale and glimmering Lamp, He felt his terrors redouble, and his ideas become more gloomy, more solemn, more despondent. He dreaded the approach of sleep: No sooner did his eyes close, wearied with tears and watching, than the dreadful visions seemed to be realised on which his mind had dwelt during the day. He found himself in sulphurous realms and burning Caverns, surrounded by Fiends appointed his Tormentors, and who drove him through a variety of tortures, each of which was more dreadful than the former. Amidst these dismal scenes wandered the Ghosts of Elvira and her Daughter. They reproached him with their deaths, recounted his crimes to the Daemons, and urged them to inflict torments of cruelty yet more refined. Such were the pictures which floated before his eyes in sleep: They vanished not till his repose was disturbed by excess of agony. Then would He start from the ground on which He had stretched himself, his brows running down with cold sweat, his eyes wild and phrenzied; and He only exchanged the terrible certainty for surmizes scarcely more supportable. He paced his dungeon with disordered steps; He gazed with terror upon the surrounding darkness, and often did He cry,

'Oh! fearful is night to the Guilty!'

The day of his second examination was at hand. He had been compelled to swallow cordials, whose virtues were calculated to restore his bodily strength, and enable him to support the question longer. On the night preceding this dreaded day, his fears for the morrow permitted him not to sleep. His terrors were so violent, as nearly to annihilate his mental powers. He sat like one stupefied near the Table on which his Lamp was burning dimly. Despair chained up his faculties in Idiotism, and He remained for some hours, unable to speak or move, or indeed to think.

'Look up, Ambrosio!' said a Voice in accents well-known to him—

The Monk started, and raised his melancholy eyes. Matilda stood before him. She had quitted her religious habit. She now wore a female dress, at once elegant and splendid: A profusion of diamonds blazed upon her robes, and her hair was confined by a coronet of Roses. In her right hand She held a small Book: A lively expression of pleasure beamed upon her countenance; But still it was mingled with a wild imperious majesty which inspired the Monk with awe, and represt in some measure his transports at seeing her.

'You here, Matilda?' He at length exclaimed; 'How have you gained entrance? Where are your Chains? What means this magnificence, and the joy which sparkles in your eyes? Have our Judges relented? Is there a chance of my escaping? Answer me for pity, and tell me, what I have to hope, or fear.'

'Ambrosio!' She replied with an air of commanding dignity; 'I have baffled the Inquisition's fury. I am free: A few moments will place kingdoms between these dungeons and me. Yet I purchase my liberty at a dear, at a dreadful price! Dare you pay the same, Ambrosio? Dare you spring without fear over the bounds

which separate Men from Angels?—You are silent.—You look upon me with eyes of suspicion and alarm—I read your thoughts and confess their justice. Yes, Ambrosio; I have sacrificed all for life and liberty. I am no longer a candidate for heaven! I have renounced God's service, and am enlisted beneath the banners of his Foes. The deed is past recall: Yet were it in my power to go back, I would not. Oh! my Friend, to expire in such torments! To die amidst curses and execrations! To bear the insults of an exasperated Mob! To be exposed to all the mortifications of shame and infamy! Who can reflect without horror on such a doom? Let me then exult in my exchange. I have sold distant and uncertain happiness for present and secure: I have preserved a life which otherwise I had lost in torture; and I have obtained the power of procuring every bliss which can make that life delicious! The Infernal Spirits obey me as their Sovereign: By their aid shall my days be past in every refinement of luxury and voluptuousness. I will enjoy unrestrained the gratification of my senses: Every passion shall be indulged, even to satiety; Then will I bid my Servants invent new pleasures, to revive and stimulate my glutted appetites! I go impatient to exercise my newly-gained dominion. I pant to be at liberty. Nothing should hold me one moment longer in this abhorred abode, but the hope of persuading you to follow my example. Ambrosio, I still love you: Our mutual guilt and danger have rendered you dearer to me than ever, and I would fain save you from impending destruction. Summon then your resolution to your aid; and renounce for immediate and certain benefits the hopes of a salvation, difficult to obtain, and perhaps altogether erroneous. Shake off the prejudice of vulgar souls; Abandon a God who has abandoned you, and raise yourself to the level of superior Beings!'

She paused for the Monk's reply: He shuddered, while He gave it.

'Matilda!' He said after a long silence in a low and unsteady voice; 'What price gave you for liberty?'

She answered him firm and dauntless.

'Ambrosio, it was my Soul!'

'Wretched Woman, what have you done? Pass but a few years, and how dreadful will be your sufferings!'

'Weak Man, pass but this night, and how dreadful will be your own! Do you remember what you have already endured? Tomorrow you must bear torments doubly exquisite. Do you remember the horrors of a fiery punishment? In two days you must be led a Victim to the Stake! What then will become of you? Still dare you hope for pardon? Still are you beguiled with visions of salvation? Think upon your crimes! Think upon your lust, your perjury, inhumanity, and hypocrisy! Think upon the innocent blood which cries to the Throne of God for vengeance, and then hope for mercy! Then dream of heaven, and sigh for worlds of light, and realms of peace and pleasure! Absurd! Open your eyes, Ambrosio, and be prudent. Hell is your lot; You are doomed to eternal perdition; Nought lies beyond your grave but a gulph of devouring flames. And will you then speed towards that Hell? Will you clasp that perdition in your arms, ere 'tis needful? Will you plunge into those flames while you still have the power to shun them? 'Tis a Madman's action. No, no, Ambrosio: Let us for awhile fly from divine vengeance. Be advised by me; Purchase by one moment's courage the bliss of years; Enjoy the present, and forget that a future lags behind.'

‘Matilda, your counsels are dangerous: I dare not, I will not follow them. I must not give up my claim to salvation. Monstrous are my crimes; But God is merciful, and I will not despair of pardon.’

‘Is such your resolution? I have no more to say. I speed to joy and liberty, and abandon you to death and eternal torments.’

‘Yet stay one moment, Matilda! You command the infernal Daemons:

You can force open these prison doors; You can release me from these chains which weigh me down. Save me, I conjure you, and bear me from these fearful abodes!’

‘You ask the only boon beyond my power to bestow. I am forbidden to assist a Churchman and a Partizan of God: Renounce those titles, and command me.’

‘I will not sell my soul to perdition.’

‘Persist in your obstinacy, till you find yourself at the Stake: Then will you repent your error, and sigh for escape when the moment is gone by. I quit you. Yet ere the hour of death arrives should wisdom enlighten you, listen to the means of repairing your present fault. I leave with you this Book. Read the four first lines of the seventh page backwards: The Spirit whom you have already once beheld will immediately appear to you. If you are wise, we shall meet again: If not, farewell for ever!’

She let the Book fall upon the ground. A cloud of blue fire wrapped itself round her: She waved her hand to Ambrosio, and disappeared. The momentary glare which the flames poured through the dungeon, on dissipating suddenly, seemed to have increased its natural gloom. The solitary Lamp scarcely gave light sufficient to guide the Monk to a Chair. He threw himself into his seat, folded his arms, and leaning his head upon the table, sank into reflections perplexing and unconnected.

He was still in this attitude when the opening of the prison door rouzed him from his stupor. He was summoned to appear before the Grand Inquisitor. He rose, and followed his Gaoler with painful steps. He was led into the same Hall, placed before the same Examiners, and was again interrogated whether He would confess. He replied as before, that having no crimes, He could acknowledge none: But when the Executioners prepared to put him to the question, when He saw the engines of torture, and remembered the pangs which they had already inflicted, his resolution failed him entirely. Forgetting the consequences, and only anxious to escape the terrors of the present moment, He made an ample confession. He disclosed every circumstance of his guilt, and owned not merely the crimes with which He was charged, but those of which He had never been suspected. Being interrogated as to Matilda’s flight which had created much confusion, He confessed that She had sold herself to Satan, and that She was indebted to Sorcery for her escape. He still assured his Judges that for his own part He had never entered into any compact with the infernal Spirits; But the threat of being tortured made him declare himself to be a Sorcerer, and Heretic, and whatever other title the Inquisitors chose to fix upon him. In consequence of this avowal, his sentence was immediately pronounced. He was ordered to prepare himself to perish in

the Auto da Fe, which was to be solemnized at twelve o'clock that night. This hour was chosen from the idea that the horror of the flames being heightened by the gloom of midnight, the execution would have a greater effect upon the mind of the People.

Ambrosio rather dead than alive was left alone in his dungeon. The moment in which this terrible decree was pronounced had nearly proved that of his dissolution. He looked forward to the morrow with despair, and his terrors increased with the approach of midnight. Sometimes He was buried in gloomy silence: At others He raved with delirious passion, wrung his hands, and cursed the hour when He first beheld the light. In one of these moments his eye rested upon Matilda's mysterious gift. His transports of rage were instantly suspended. He looked earnestly at the Book; He took it up, but immediately threw it from him with horror. He walked rapidly up and down his dungeon: Then stopped, and again fixed his eyes on the spot where the Book had fallen. He reflected that here at least was a resource from the fate which He dreaded. He stooped, and took it up a second time.

He remained for some time trembling and irresolute: He longed to try the charm, yet feared its consequences. The recollection of his sentence at length fixed his indecision. He opened the Volume; but his agitation was so great that He at first sought in vain for the page mentioned by Matilda. Ashamed of himself, He called all his courage to his aid. He turned to the seventh leaf. He began to read it aloud; But his eyes frequently wandered from the Book, while He anxiously cast them round in search of the Spirit, whom He wished, yet dreaded to behold. Still He persisted in his design; and with a voice unassured and frequent interruptions, He contrived to finish the four first lines of the page.

They were in a language, whose import was totally unknown to him.

Scarce had He pronounced the last word when the effects of the charm were evident. A loud burst of Thunder was heard; The prison shook to its very foundations; A blaze of lightning flashed through the Cell; and in the next moment, borne upon sulphurous whirl-winds, Lucifer stood before him a second time. But He came not as when at Matilda's summons He borrowed the Seraph's form to deceive Ambrosio. He appeared in all that ugliness which since his fall from heaven had been his portion: His blasted limbs still bore marks of the Almighty's thunder: A swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form: His hands and feet were armed with long Talons: Fury glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror: Over his huge shoulders waved two enormous sable wings; and his hair was supplied by living snakes, which twined themselves round his brows with frightful hissings. In one hand He held a roll of parchment, and in the other an iron pen. Still the lightning flashed around him, and the Thunder with repeated bursts, seemed to announce the dissolution of Nature.

Terrified at an Apparition so different from what He had expected, Ambrosio remained gazing upon the Fiend, deprived of the power of utterance. The Thunder had ceased to roll: Universal silence reigned through the dungeon.

‘For what am I summoned hither?’ said the Daemon, in a voice which sulphurous fogs had damped to hoarseness—

At the sound Nature seemed to tremble: A violent earthquake rocked the ground, accompanied by a fresh burst of Thunder, louder and more appalling than the first.

Ambrosio was long unable to answer the Daemon’s demand.

‘I am condemned to die;’ He said with a faint voice, his blood running cold, while He gazed upon his dreadful Visitor. ‘Save me! Bear me from hence!’

‘Shall the reward of my services be paid me? Dare you embrace my cause? Will you be mine, body and soul? Are you prepared to renounce him who made you, and him who died for you? Answer but “Yes” and Lucifer is your Slave.’

‘Will no less price content you? Can nothing satisfy you but my eternal ruin? Spirit, you ask too much. Yet convey me from this dungeon: Be my Servant for one hour, and I will be yours for a thousand years. Will not this offer suffice?’

‘It will not. I must have your soul; must have it mine, and mine for ever.’

‘Insatiate Daemon, I will not doom myself to endless torments. I will not give up my hopes of being one day pardoned.’

‘You will not? On what Chimaera rest then your hopes? Short-sighted Mortal! Miserable Wretch! Are you not guilty? Are you not infamous in the eyes of Men and Angels. Can such enormous sins be forgiven? Hope you to escape my power? Your fate is already pronounced. The Eternal has abandoned you; Mine you are marked in the book of destiny, and mine you must and shall be!’

‘Fiend, ’tis false! Infinite is the Almighty’s mercy, and the Penitent shall meet his forgiveness. My crimes are monstrous, but I will not despair of pardon: Haply, when they have received due chastisement....’

‘Chastisement? Was Purgatory meant for guilt like yours? Hope you that your offences shall be bought off by prayers of superstitious dotards and droning Monks? Ambrosio, be wise! Mine you must be: You are doomed to flames, but may shun them for the present. Sign this parchment: I will bear you from hence, and you may pass your remaining years in bliss and liberty. Enjoy your existence: Indulge in every pleasure to which appetite may lead you: But from the moment that it quits your body, remember that your soul belongs to me, and that I will not be defrauded of my right.’

The Monk was silent; But his looks declared that the Tempter’s words were not thrown away. He reflected on the conditions proposed with horror: On the other hand, He believed himself doomed to perdition and that, by refusing the Daemon’s succour, He only hastened tortures which He never could escape. The Fiend saw that his resolution was shaken: He renewed his instances, and endeavoured to fix the Abbot’s

indecision. He described the agonies of death in the most terrific colours; and He worked so powerfully upon Ambrosio's despair and fears that He prevailed upon him to receive the Parchment. He then struck the iron Pen which He held into a vein of the Monk's left hand. It pierced deep, and was instantly filled with blood; Yet Ambrosio felt no pain from the wound. The Pen was put into his hand: It trembled. The Wretch placed the Parchment on the Table before him, and prepared to sign it. Suddenly He held his hand: He started away hastily, and threw the Pen upon the table.

'What am I doing?' He cried—Then turning to the Fiend with a desperate air, 'Leave me! Begone! I will not sign the Parchment.'

'Fool!' exclaimed the disappointed Daemon, darting looks so furious as penetrated the Friar's soul with horror; 'Thus am I trifled with? Go then! Rave in agony, expire in tortures, and then learn the extent of the Eternal's mercy! But beware how you make me again your mock! Call me no more till resolved to accept my offers! Summon me a second time to dismiss me thus idly, and these Talons shall rend you into a thousand pieces! Speak yet again; Will you sign the Parchment?'

'I will not! Leave me! Away!'

Instantly the Thunder was heard to roll horribly: Once more the earth trembled with violence: The Dungeon resounded with loud shrieks, and the Daemon fled with blasphemy and curses.

At first, the Monk rejoiced at having resisted the Seducer's arts, and obtained a triumph over Mankind's Enemy: But as the hour of punishment drew near, his former terrors revived in his heart. Their momentary repose seemed to have given them fresh vigour. The nearer that the time approached, the more did He dread appearing before the Throne of God. He shuddered to think how soon He must be plunged into eternity; How soon meet the eyes of his Creator, whom He had so grievously offended. The Bell announced midnight: It was the signal for being led to the Stake! As He listened to the first stroke, the blood ceased to circulate in the Abbot's veins: He heard death and torture murmured in each succeeding sound. He expected to see the Archers entering his prison; and as the Bell forbore to toll, he seized the magic volume in a fit of despair. He opened it, turned hastily to the seventh page, and as if fearing to allow himself a moment's thought ran over the fatal lines with rapidity. Accompanied by his former terrors, Lucifer again stood before the Trembler.

'You have summoned me,' said the Fiend; 'Are you determined to be wise? Will you accept my conditions? You know them already. Renounce your claim to salvation, make over to me your soul, and I bear you from this dungeon instantly. Yet is it time. Resolve, or it will be too late. Will you sign the Parchment?'

'I must!—Fate urges me! I accept your conditions.'

'Sign the Parchment!' replied the Daemon in an exulting tone.

The Contract and the bloody Pen still lay upon the Table. Ambrosio drew near it. He prepared to sign his name. A moment's reflection made him hesitate.

'Hark!' cried the Tempter; 'They come! Be quick! Sign the Parchment, and I bear you from hence this moment.'

In effect, the Archers were heard approaching, appointed to lead Ambrosio to the Stake. The sound encouraged the Monk in his resolution.

'What is the import of this writing?' said He.

'It makes your soul over to me for ever, and without reserve.'

'What am I to receive in exchange?'

'My protection, and release from this dungeon. Sign it, and this instant I bear you away.'

Ambrosio took up the Pen; He set it to the Parchment. Again his courage failed him: He felt a pang of terror at his heart, and once more threw the Pen upon the Table.

'Weak and Puerile!' cried the exasperated Fiend: 'Away with this folly! Sign the writing this instant, or I sacrifice you to my rage!'

At this moment the bolt of the outward Door was drawn back. The Prisoner heard the rattling of Chains; The heavy Bar fell; The Archers were on the point of entering. Worked up to phrenzy by the urgent danger, shrinking from the approach of death, terrified by the Daemon's threats, and seeing no other means to escape destruction, the wretched Monk complied. He signed the fatal contract, and gave it hastily into the evil Spirit's hands, whose eyes, as He received the gift, glared with malicious rapture.

'Take it!' said the God-abandoned; 'Now then save me! Snatch me from hence!'

'Hold! Do you freely and absolutely renounce your Creator and his Son?'

'I do! I do!'

'Do you make over your soul to me for ever?'

'For ever!'

'Without reserve or subterfuge? Without future appeal to the divine mercy?'

The last Chain fell from the door of the prison: The key was heard turning in the Lock: Already the iron door grated heavily upon its rusty hinges.

'I am yours for ever and irrevocably!' cried the Monk wild with terror: 'I abandon all claim to salvation! I own no power but yours! Hark! Hark! They come! Oh! save me! Bear me away!'

‘I have triumphed! You are mine past reprieve, and I fulfil my promise.’

While He spoke, the Door unclosed. Instantly the Daemon grasped one of Ambrosio’s arms, spread his broad pinions, and sprang with him into the air. The roof opened as they soared upwards, and closed again when they had quitted the Dungeon.

In the meanwhile, the Gaoler was thrown into the utmost surprize by the disappearance of his Prisoner. Though neither He nor the Archers were in time to witness the Monk’s escape, a sulphurous smell prevailing through the prison sufficiently informed them by whose aid He had been liberated. They hastened to make their report to the Grand Inquisitor. The story, how a Sorcerer had been carried away by the Devil, was soon noised about Madrid; and for some days the whole City was employed in discussing the subject. Gradually it ceased to be the topic of conversation: Other adventures arose whose novelty engaged universal attention; and Ambrosio was soon forgotten as totally, as if He never had existed. While this was passing, the Monk supported by his infernal guide, traversed the air with the rapidity of an arrow, and a few moments placed him upon a Precipice’s brink, the steepest in Sierra Morena.

Though rescued from the Inquisition, Ambrosio as yet was insensible of the blessings of liberty. The damning contract weighed heavy upon his mind; and the scenes in which He had been a principal actor had left behind them such impressions as rendered his heart the seat of anarchy and confusion. The Objects now before his eyes, and which the full Moon sailing through clouds permitted him to examine, were ill-calculated to inspire that calm, of which He stood so much in need. The disorder of his imagination was increased by the wildness of the surrounding scenery; By the gloomy Caverns and steep rocks, rising above each other, and dividing the passing clouds; solitary clusters of Trees scattered here and there, among whose thick-twined branches the wind of night sighed hoarsely and mournfully; the shrill cry of mountain Eagles, who had built their nests among these lonely Desarts; the stunning roar of torrents, as swelled by late rains they rushed violently down tremendous precipices; and the dark waters of a silent sluggish stream which faintly reflected the moonbeams, and bathed the Rock’s base on which Ambrosio stood. The Abbot cast round him a look of terror. His infernal Conductor was still by his side, and eyed him with a look of mingled malice, exultation, and contempt.

‘Whither have you brought me?’ said the Monk at length in an hollow trembling voice: ‘Why am I placed in this melancholy scene? Bear me from it quickly! Carry me to Matilda!’

The Fiend replied not, but continued to gaze upon him in silence.

Ambrosio could not sustain his glance; He turned away his eyes, while thus spoke the Daemon:

‘I have him then in my power! This model of piety! This being without reproach! This Mortal who placed his puny virtues on a level with those of Angels. He is mine! Irrevocably, eternally mine! Companions of my sufferings! Denizens of hell! How grateful will be my present!’

He paused; then addressed himself to the Monk——

‘Carry you to Matilda?’ He continued, repeating Ambrosio’s words:

‘Wretch! you shall soon be with her! You well deserve a place near her, for hell boasts no miscreant more guilty than yourself.

Hark, Ambrosio, while I unveil your crimes! You have shed the blood of two innocents; Antonia and Elvira perished by your hand. That Antonia whom you violated, was your Sister! That Elvira whom you murdered, gave you birth! Tremble, abandoned Hypocrite! Inhuman Parricide! Incestuous Ravisher! Tremble at the extent of your offences! And you it was who thought yourself proof against temptation, absolved from human frailties, and free from error and vice! Is pride then a virtue? Is inhumanity no fault? Know, vain Man! That I long have marked you for my prey: I watched the movements of your heart; I saw that you were virtuous from vanity, not principle, and I seized the fit moment of seduction. I observed your blind idolatry of the Madona’s picture. I bad a subordinate but crafty spirit assume a similar form, and you eagerly yielded to the blandishments of Matilda. Your pride was gratified by her flattery; Your lust only needed an opportunity to break forth; You ran into the snare blindly, and scrupled not to commit a crime which you blamed in another with unfeeling severity. It was I who threw Matilda in your way; It was I who gave you entrance to Antonia’s chamber; It was I who caused the dagger to be given you which pierced your Sister’s bosom; and it was I who warned Elvira in dreams of your designs upon her Daughter, and thus, by preventing your profiting by her sleep, compelled you to add rape as well as incest to the catalogue of your crimes. Hear, hear, Ambrosio! Had you resisted me one minute longer, you had saved your body and soul. The guards whom you heard at your prison door came to signify your pardon. But I had already triumphed: My plots had already succeeded. Scarcely could I propose crimes so quick as you performed them. You are mine, and Heaven itself cannot rescue you from my power. Hope not that your penitence will make void our contract. Here is your bond signed with your blood; You have given up your claim to mercy, and nothing can restore to you the rights which you have foolishly resigned. Believe you that your secret thoughts escaped me? No, no, I read them all! You trusted that you should still have time for repentance. I saw your artifice, knew its falsity, and rejoiced in deceiving the deceiver! You are mine beyond reprieve: I burn to possess my right, and alive you quit not these mountains.’

During the Daemon’s speech, Ambrosio had been stupefied by terror and surprize. This last declaration rouzed him.

‘Not quit these mountains alive?’ He exclaimed: ‘Perfidious, what mean you? Have you forgotten our contract?’

The Fiend answered by a malicious laugh:

‘Our contract? Have I not performed my part? What more did I promise than to save you from your prison? Have I not done so? Are you not safe from the Inquisition—safe from all but from me? Fool that you were to confide yourself to a Devil! Why did you not stipulate for life, and power, and pleasure? Then

all would have been granted: Now, your reflections come too late. Miscreant, prepare for death; You have not many hours to live!'

On hearing this sentence, dreadful were the feelings of the devoted Wretch! He sank upon his knees, and raised his hands towards heaven. The Fiend read his intention and prevented it—

'What?' He cried, darting at him a look of fury: 'Dare you still implore the Eternal's mercy? Would you feign penitence, and again act an Hypocrite's part? Villain, resign your hopes of pardon. Thus I secure my prey!'

As He said this, darting his talons into the Monk's shaven crown, He sprang with him from the rock. The Caves and mountains rang with Ambrosio's shrieks. The Daemon continued to soar aloft, till reaching a dreadful height, He released the sufferer. Headlong fell the Monk through the airy waste; The sharp point of a rock received him; and He rolled from precipice to precipice, till bruised and mangled He rested on the river's banks. Life still existed in his miserable frame: He attempted in vain to raise himself; His broken and dislocated limbs refused to perform their office, nor was He able to quit the spot where He had first fallen. The Sun now rose above the horizon; Its scorching beams darted full upon the head of the expiring Sinner. Myriads of insects were called forth by the warmth; They drank the blood which trickled from Ambrosio's wounds; He had no power to drive them from him, and they fastened upon his sores, darted their stings into his body, covered him with their multitudes, and inflicted on him tortures the most exquisite and insupportable. The Eagles of the rock tore his flesh piecemeal, and dug out his eyeballs with their crooked beaks. A burning thirst tormented him; He heard the river's murmur as it rolled beside him, but strove in vain to drag himself towards the sound. Blind, maimed, helpless, and despairing, venting his rage in blasphemy and curses, execrating his existence, yet dreading the arrival of death destined to yield him up to greater torments, six miserable days did the Villain languish. On the Seventh a violent storm arose: The winds in fury rent up rocks and forests: The sky was now black with clouds, now sheeted with fire: The rain fell in torrents; It swelled the stream; The waves overflowed their banks; They reached the spot where Ambrosio lay, and when they abated carried with them into the river the Corse of the despairing Monk.

Northanger Abbey

Full Text

Northanger Abbey (1817) by Jane Austen

Supplemental

Austen: Social Realism and the Novel

By Kathryn Sutherland
The British Library
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Jane Austen lived at a time when novel reading had become one of the major forms of entertainment for the middle classes. New works were prohibitively expensive to buy, but there were various methods of sharing and borrowing the latest fiction through circulating libraries, subscriptions libraries and reading clubs. Though widely read, the novel's status was not high. Fiction poured from the printing presses, tales of adventure, mystery and intrigue with improbable settings and clumsy plots that lurched from one sensational incident to another. They often had bizarre titles, like *Anna: or Memoirs of a Welch Heiress: interspersed with Anecdotes of a Nabob* (1785), by Anna Maria Bennett, of which one contemporary reviewer wrote: 'In some parts of it the incidents are scarcely within the verge of probability; and the language is generally incorrect'. Ann Radcliffe's popular 'Gothic' fictions, enjoyed by Catherine Morland and Isabella Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*, and Harriet Smith in *Emma,* occupied the high end of the market. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Radcliffe's heroine, the sensitive and romantically named Emily St Aubert, is imprisoned by her wicked uncle in an Italian castle where she undergoes numerous terrors before she eventually escapes.

Jane Austen avidly devoured this pulp fiction, but she also reacted critically to it in writing her own novels. Her spoof *Plan of a Novel, according to hints from various quarters*, written in 1815-1816 around the time of the publication of *Emma*, mocks its extravagance. *The Plan* (a recipe for how not to write a novel) has several specific targets among the day's bestsellers. Of these, Mary Brunton's *Self-Control* (1810) is the most interesting because it is a novel that Austen refers to in several of her letters as the kind of work against which her own novels are written (see, for example, her letter to Anna Lefroy, 24 November 1814). In *Self-Control* the heroine Laura Montreville (note again the romantic, non-English sounding name, so different from those of Austen's heroines) suffers dreadful experiences in her attempts to elude the lecherous villain Colonel Hargrave. She travels from Scotland to London, is kidnapped, endures a perilous sea crossing to Canada, and eventually escapes by canoe from a band of American Indians.

Jane Austen commented specifically on her own novels in relation to this kind of extravagantly romantic writing that,

> I could not sit seriously down to write a serious Romance under any other motive than to save my Life, & if it were indispensable for me to keep it up & never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first Chapter. – No – I must keep to my own style & go on in my own Way; And though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other
>
> (1 April 1816, to James Stanier Clarke, an enthusiastic admirer of romances).

By contrast, and from the beginning, her readers saw that Jane Austen was doing something new with the novel, that she was using it to describe probable reality and the kinds of people one felt one already knew. The narratives of her heroines play out within the realms of the possible. They are set in southern England, in places and a landscape Austen knew well. As Scott suggested, her plots are minimal and the adventures her heroines meet with are no more than the experiences of her readers: preparations for a dance, an outing to the seaside, a picnic. Austen used fiction to describe social reality within her own time and class (the gentry and professional classes of southern England in the early 19th century). By so doing, she was able to introduce something closer to real morality in describing the range of human relationships that we all are likely to encounter in ordinary life. Her subjects are the behaviour of parents to their children, the dangers and pleasures of falling in love, of making friends, of getting on with neighbours, and above all of discriminating between those who mean us well and those who may not.

Jane Austen's social realism includes her understanding that women's lives in the early 19th century are limited in opportunity, even among the gentry and upper middle classes. She understands that marriage is women's best route to financial security and social respect. Many of the crucial events of her stories take place indoors, in the female space of the drawing room. Often her plots move forward by means of overheard conversations. She writes some of the most natural and real-seeming conversations in literature. Rumour places a large part in transmitting news, and in her small, enclosed communities, everyone is a gossip.

'[T]here is scarcely an Incident or conversation, or a person that you are not inclined to imagine you have at one time or other in your Life been a witness to, born a part in, & been acquainted with', observed one reader, whose impressions Austen recorded in *Opinions of Mansfield Park*. The contemporary novelist, Walter Scott, reviewing *Emma* in 1816 described it as 'keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life' and, he continued, '*Emma* has even less story than [Jane Austen's] preceding novels.' This may seem like an odd kind of compliment but Scott meant it as the highest praise. Ten years later, in March 1826, he wrote in his diary: '[R]ead again and for the third time at least Miss Austen's very finely written novel of *Pride and Prejudice*. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with.'

To say that Austen is a realist as a writer is not quite the same as saying she describes society as it really is. Her novels are also romantic comedies. In novel after novel, love and good fortune win out and the future looks perfect for the handsome young couple whose union is finally confirmed in the closing pages. This happens despite the fact that many married couples are portrayed as ill-suited or ridiculous (think of Mr and Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* or Mr and Mrs Elton in *Emma*). Realism is a literary device rejecting escapism and extravagance to produce a lifelike illusion and not a direct translation of reality.

Frankenstein

Full Text

Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus (1818) by Mary Shelley

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Videos

- Don't Reanimate Corpses! Frankenstein Part 1: Crash Course Literature 205
- Frankenstein, Part 2: Crash Course Literature 206

Supplemental

"The Science of Life and Death in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*"

By Sharon Ruston

Far from the fantastic and improbable tale that Mary Shelley's Frankenstein now seems to us, the novel was declared by one reviewer upon publication to have "an air of reality attached to it, by being connected with the favourite projects and passions of the times".[1] Among these were the scientific investigations into the states of life and death. Considerable uncertainty surrounded these categories. So much so that it was not far-fetched that Frankenstein should assert: "Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds" (ch. 4). He was not alone in considering that the boundary between life and death was imaginary and that it might be breached.

Worried by the potential inability to distinguish between the states of life and death, two doctors, William Hawes and Thomas Cogan, set up the Royal Humane Society in London in 1774. It was initially called the "Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned"; its aims were to publish information to help people resuscitate others, and it paid for attempts to save lives (the Society paid more money if the attempt was successful). Many people could not swim at this time despite the fact that they worked and lived along London's rivers and canals. There was an annual procession of those "raised from the dead" by the Society's methods, which may well have included people who had intended suicide too. One such seems to have been Mary Shelley's mother, the feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, who after leaping from Putney Bridge into the Thames in the depth of depression complained "I have only to lament, that, when the bitterness of death was past, I was inhumanly brought back to life and misery". The pun on her "inhumane" treatment may well refer to the efforts of the Humane Society in rescuing her.[2] The spectacular tales of apparent resurrections from the dead by the Society fed the public's concern that it was impossible to be sure whether a person was truly dead and, consequently, fears of being buried alive grew.

There was a scientific basis for the public's anxieties. The French Encyclopédie distinguished between two kinds of death, "incomplete" and "absolute": "That there is no remedy for death is an axiom widely

admitted; we, however, are willing to affirm that death can be cured".[3] In London, James Curry, a physician at Guy's hospital and one of the Shelleys' doctors in 1817, wrote a book that gave information on how to identify what he called "absolute" from "apparent" death.[4] In the book he argued that the putrefaction of the body was the only way to be completely sure that a person was dead. There was interest in states of so-called "suspended animation", such as fainting, coma, and sleeping. Mary Shelley followed contemporary scientific language when she described episodes of fainting within the novel. When Victor Frankenstein creates the creature, he collapses because of a nervous illness and describes himself in this state as "lifeless". In this instance it is Clerval who "restored" him to "life" (ch. 5). Elizabeth faints on seeing the corpse of William: "She fainted, and was restored with extreme difficulty. When she again lived, it was only to weep and sigh" (ch. 7). The language here is of a life lost and restored; while Elizabeth is unconscious, she is described as being dead.

There were serious attempts, too, to reanimate the truly dead. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, the Italian physician Luigi Galvani found that frog's legs twitched as if alive when struck by a spark of electricity. In her 1831 Preface to Frankenstein, Mary Shelley mentions how discussions on this idea that one could electrically stimulate a dead muscle into apparent life — known as "galvanism" — came to influence her story.

> Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. . . . Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.
>
> Night waned upon this talk, and even the witching hour had gone by, before we retired to rest. When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, —I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion.

Galvani's nephew, Giovanni Aldini, progressed from frogs legs to attempting the reanimation of hanged criminals, making use of the "Murder Act" of 1752, which added the punishment of dissection to hanging. In 1803, Aldini was able to experiment with some success upon George Forster, who had been found guilty of murdering his wife and child. Onlookers reported that Forster's eye opened, his right hand was raised and clenched, and his legs moved.

M. Aldini, who is the nephew of the discoverer of this most interesting science, showed the eminent and superior powers of galvanism to be far beyond any other stimulant in nature. On the first application of

the process to the face, the jaws of the deceased criminal began to quiver, and the adjoining muscles were horribly contorted, and one eye was actually opened. In the subsequent part of the process the right hand was raised and clenched, and the legs and thighs were set in motion. Mr Pass, the beadle of the Surgeons' Company, who was officially present during this experiment, was so alarmed that he died of fright soon after his return home.[5]

In Mary and Percy Shelleys' tragic personal lives, there is much evidence that they believed the dead could be successfully reanimated. For example, Percy Shelley writes of their child, William Shelley's last illness: "By the skill of the physician he was once reanimated after the process of death had actually commenced, and he lived four days after that time".[6] Death, it seems, could be reversed.

In the years leading up to Mary Shelley's publication of Frankenstein, there was a very public debate in the Royal College of Surgeons between two surgeons, John Abernethy and William Lawrence, on the nature of life itself. Both of these surgeons had links with the Shelleys: Percy had read one of Abernethy's books and quoted it in his own work and Lawrence had been the Shelleys' doctor.[7] In this debate, questions were asked about how to define life , and how living bodies were different from dead or inorganic bodies. Abernethy argued that life did not depend upon the body's structure, the way it was organised or arranged, but existed separately as a material substance, a kind of vital principle, "superadded" to the body. His opponent, Lawrence, thought this a ridiculous idea and instead understood life as simply the working operation of all the body's functions, the sum of its parts. Lawrence's ideas were seen as being too radical: they seemed to suggest that the soul, which was often seen as being akin to the vital principle, did not exist either. Lawrence was forced to withdraw the book in which he had published his lectures and resign the hospital post he held, though he was reinstated after publicly denouncing the views he had put forward. The episode showed just how controversial the categories of life and dead had become and provided further inspiration for Mary Shelley's novel.

The Victorian Gothic

By Jack Clark

The late Victorian period saw the publication of some of the most enduring and popular Gothic texts in English literature. These texts were controversial as they often scrutinized and critiqued social and cultural structures of the period and simultaneously sensationalized them with romantic notions, sexual depravity, immorality, and grotesque monstrous forms. Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a key example of these trends in Victorian Gothic literature. Upon its publication, the text fell under scrutiny for being controversial, vulgar, and immoral but is now regarded as one of the most provocative and philosophical texts of the late nineteenth century. Wilde had intended the text to be simultaneously controversial and provocative as a critique of Victorian aesthetic obsession with beauty and its culturally believed correlation with moral sensibility. The Victorians use of art as a tool for social education and moral enlightenment, and to reinforce the superficial nature of this idealistic moral society. Wilde identifies these hypocritical dualities of beauty and immorality, the sublime and the grotesque, and

influence and the monstrous, and creates Dorian Gray as the embodiment of these observations and how a monstrous individual can remain morally infallible if they are physically beautiful. The Gothic trend of the late Victorian Gothic novel was a philosophical observation of the absurdities inherent within the society. But these texts were considered disturbing and were something that you read behind closed doors and hid under your mattress as a sensational controversial piece of erotic literature that you would not show to anyone else. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a comedy of manners and a horror of beauty that corrupts the soul and the picture acts as a mirror to the soul to show the monster within. Subsequently, the text acts as a good example of the late Victorian prototypical Gothic novel that presents themes that challenge key cultural narratives.

Social and Religious Upheavals

To further understand the context of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it is important to understand the social issues present within Victorian society. The Victorian period was wrought with a multitude of complex cultural oscillations surrounding societal expectation, technological innovation, religion, and moral panic. It was a period of revolution; the steam engine changed the nature of transport, industry and the economy which also lead to rapid urbanization as the rural working class and immigrants began to migrate to the city center for refuge and work in the growing industrial city which held a population of over three million toward the end of the nineteenth century (Schwarz 1-2). This also meant that the once physically separated social classes now lived closer together than ever before. The result of this was a call for social segregation of the working class for any further successful development of London suburbs (Ackroyd 523). Social entrepreneurs such as Charles Dickens advocated for the rights of women and children and spoke often about education reform for the working class (House 10). He would often use his observations to inspire characters for his own texts such as *Oliver Twist*(1837) *A Christmas Carol* (1843), and *Great Expectation*s (1861). The advent of scientific empiricism and education furthered the development of technology and led to the subsequent publishing of layman's scientific texts meant that that the average person was able to gain an understanding of scientific theorems (Harkup 22). Mary Shelley's father William Godwin was instrumental to this movement for accessible education by opening a library and publishing house called Juvenile Library and believed that his daughters should also be well educated despite their gender (Harkup 23). Shelley's education plus having the benefit of being privy to intellectual conversation among her father's friends would become a significant influence for her in creating *Frankenstein* (1818).

The influence of religion over the general populace was also subject to change; the focus on scientific research into the origins of creation, and post-Enlightenment rationale claimed that religion was part of prior superstition before natural phenomenon could be explained through the scientific process. Subsequently, public faith in Christian Orthodoxy began to wane in the wake of Enlightenment rationalist thinking that deliberately undermined the church and the monarchy. As a result of these key factors, England began to secularise. Scholars such as Fred Botting, Joseph Carroll, Richard Ellman, and Angela Kingston discuss the conflict between "homoeroticisms correlation with male sexual phycology and the

Christian ethos of good and evil as Wilde conceives it" that seemed to correlate with this secularisation (3). This branch of scholarship typically argues that the text offers "two competing visions of human nature... the first derives from the aesthetic doctrines of Walter Pater, and the other from a traditional Christian conception of the soul" (2). Pater's faith in Christianity waned as he began advocating for human character and morality driven by sensational pleasures, a philosophy that Wilde was partial too in his advocacy for "art for art's sake" rather than the Victorian necessity to assign moral lessons for the middle and upper classes and social education to the artwork. While this is the case, the text also alludes to Christian themes surrounding the sanctity of the soul and the role of corruption.

Due to the ever-evolving class structure and secularisation, societal moral panics surrounding sexuality, consumption, and etiquette were a common thread. Much of this could be attributed to class reform, as the middle classes were beginning to gain wealth, power and ambition to rise in the social stratosphere through education and industrialization. As a result, a need developed for engineers, accountants, lawyers, and politicians among other professions. (Guy 177). While this revolution was gaining momentum in England and social revolutions raged over the world, the Victorians also reigned over one of the most powerful economic empires in the world due to the cotton industry, that produced immense amounts wealth. After the defeat of the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815 by the English at Waterloo, there was no significant rival to this economic expansion (Cornwell 342). This, however, did not stop threats from being created to take advantage of the fear of the empire's populace losing their position. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) manifested an eastern threat that could upset modern technological might with ancient supernatural power. Robert Louis Stevenson also perpetuated this fear of internal threats from human nature itself with the publication of the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Stevenson stipulated that "within each of us two natures are at war" as humanity struggled to control its more animalistic natures and conform (54). Stevenson's work was an inspiration to Wilde when conceptualizing the duality of Victorian society.

These changes in power, culture, and control meant the period was a turbulent time where previously believed truths and facts were under scrutiny. This cultural upheaval caused uncertainty and anxiety across the class threshold (Ackroyd 599). Because of this, there was also resistance to Enlightenment rationality that believed that romanticism and faith still played an important cognitive role within European culture (Saul, Tebbutt 43). Gothic literature was a significant aspect of this counter-revolution in England, often being classed as romantic texts, while simultaneously invoking supernatural themes, reacting to the picturesque paradigm that was inherent in Victorian mentality which gave Wilde his inspiration (Whelan 100).

Aestheticism and Morality

The arts became a fixation of the Victorian middle-class population who believed that morality and virtue could be taught through its sophisticated appearance and could be simultaneously mirrored in the public forum. Art was to be an influence upon the impressionable which Wilde highlights in the beginning of his

text upon first introducing Dorian Gray. In the beginning of the text, Basil Hayward has been in the process of finishing a portrait of Dorian, whose physical beauty has inspired him. His associate Lord Henry is very interested to meet the boy who could inspire such artistic inspiration, but Basil is very protective of Dorian as he fears that his character could be manipulated under the wrong Influence. The text contends that influence is a predominantly negative force. Basil makes this assertion to Lord Henry by saying, "...don't spoil him (Dorian). Don't try and influence him. Your influence would be bad" (15). Wilde once again, adds another level of irony as Basil had just finished a monologue about the captivating influence that Dorian has over Basil's artistic creativity which he concludes by stating that, "as long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me" (13). Lord Henry reinforces this point by bluntly suggesting to Dorian upon meeting him that "there is no such thing as a good influence... all influence is immoral..." (18). Ironically Basil and Lord Henry are the two key influences over his character development throughout the text and in keeping with the theme of aestheticism, both present Dorian with a piece of art that aid in Dorian's character development. Basil paints the portrait and presents it to Dorian, having intended to capture the innocence and beauty of the man but instead introduces him to vanity and a rival. Lord Henry presents Dorian with an obscure book without a title that in his youth had shaped many of his opinions that he promotes (19). As the two key signifiers of art of the nineteenth century, the book acts as a road map for Dorian into his immortality as he attempts to mirror Lord Henry's philosophy. The portrait reflects Dorian's soul and shows him the consequence of his sin. Together the two symbolize the resounding influence that the two men have had over Dorian's development.

The influence of Basil is the symbol of moral aestheticism, constantly observing all that is physically beautiful and maintaining the duality between morality and said beauty; a philosophy that "argues for a healthy balance between our inner and outer selves. Wilde frequently has Basil consistently use adjectives that typically pertain to personality characteristics when discussing physical beauty. Basil is at the center of this ironic juxtaposition, often composing monologues about beauty and then referring to Dorian's personality (13). A deeper level of this is Basil's inability to separate Dorian from the portrait in the second chapter where he states that, "as soon as you (Dorian) are dry, you shall be varnished and framed, and sent home" (25). It is this dramatic irony and treatment of the portrait as if it were an autonomous being that sets the foundation for the symbiotic relationship that Dorian develops with the portrait as a reflection of his soul and the proposition of the portrait acting as a rival that Dorian is jealous of and cannot overcome or escape. For example, the portrait briefly acts as a moral compass that mirrors the soul after the death of his fiancé, Sybil Vane when Dorian realizes the underlying nature of the portrait; "but here was a visible symbol of the degradation of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls" (78). Dorian deduces that if he can keep the beauty of the portrait unsoiled then he has successfully maintained the purity of his soul (78). Here, Wide is exploring his alchemic combination of aestheticism and Christian moral virtue through the use of the portrait as a gauge to detect sin. The climax of the text surrounds Dorian's decision to hide the portrait and allow it to bear his sin as he becomes more obsessed with his own beauty and youth stating that, "eternal youth,

infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins – he was to have all these things… the portrait was to bear the burden…" (85). Within this moment, Dorian briefly removes the influence of the portrait by locking it up, so he can freely publicly observe his hedonistic lifestyle without the shame of the portrait's degradation thus subscribing to the influence of Lord Henry rather than Basil.

Public versus Private

The coexistence of public and private affairs in the same space became a zeitgeist of the Victorian social atmosphere which is exemplified by the theatre where private boxes were constructed to separate the aristocracy from the other classes and the stage curtains of the theatre "serve to frame rather than hide what happens on stage" (Sampson 30). This fascination with this juxtaposition also extended to the home which was an example of how individuals could occupy both public and private space (30). The Victorian period was one of excess, social change, empire, and a symbiotic relationship between beauty and moral fidelity. The duality of morality and beauty was a key nature of this modern urban structure that was unfolding. The Victorians became very aesthetically focused on surfaces and surface beauty. As Lara Whelan states, the picturesque nature of the city became a representation of progress (100). Stark differences could be drawn between the sophisticated aristocratic dwellings in Kensington and the derelict mean streets of Whitechapel because of the way they are visibly perceived rather than their internal natures. Wilde uses the Metaphor of the picture in the attic to juxtapose Dorians own simultaneous superficial and visceral duplicity. While Dorian and Lord Henry open up the public areas of his house to maintain outward appearances and charm the other members of the aristocracy with celebrated musicians, dinners, exotic artworks, and decorations of gold and silver, the portrait is hidden in the same space (103). Thus, illustrating the ability of the gentry to have both public and private affairs simultaneously occupying the same environment.

Lord Henry represents the nature of this hedonistic aestheticism, as he constantly makes controversial statements surrounding the nature of beauty and experiencing every sensation and pleasure. These are the words that initially influence Dorian to unwittingly trade his soul for eternal youth and Lord Henry convinces him that beauty and youth are the only things worth having (21). It is only after that the portrait is removed from view that Dorian finds the book that Lord Henry has sent him. With the influence of the portrait removed, Dorian finds himself captivated by this new influencer (102). As stated above the book is never identified but Wilde does describe the contents of the text through Dorian's eyes. The text focuses on a supposed psychological study of a Parisian man who experimented with the pleasures and sensations that are renounced as sin for the sake of nineteenth-century virtue (100). However, it is important to note that Lord Henry does not necessarily believe every word that he states, nor does he live by his own philosophy. Edouard Roditi specifies that the perversion of Lord Henry's true doctrine a key element to the text. He argues that Lord Henry's true philosophy is one of "inaction… beyond good and evil… Lord Henry never acts and never falls" (124). Whereas Dorian naively enacts Lord Henry's philosophy whilst maintaining the façade of his manners and morality within the Victorian social landscape.

Subsequently, late Victorian Gothic novels such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are often immersed in the darker elements of the urban landscape of London: Mary Shelley's (1815) creature of science is cast out into the urban and rural landscapes amongst civility, Bram Stoker's (1897) *Count Dracula* is an invading foreign entity with ancient supernatural abilities that could counteract modern progression, Robert Louis Stevenson's (1886) Mr. Hyde is let loose on the streets of London to conduct murder and depravity. Likewise, Dorian Gray's immorality makes him monstrous though, unlike previous iterations of the monstrous Gothic antagonist that donned a grotesque aesthetic, Dorian is considered beautiful. Through this duplicitous characterization, Wilde creates a more sinister creature outside the typical good and sublime, evil and grotesque binary of Victorian Gothic. One that is harder to identify that could exist right next to the spectator to challenge the Victorian duality of morality and beauty through the paradox of Dorian's influential sinful nature yet unblemished physicality. Despite the fact the portrait has been removed from his sight, the portrait is always on his mind and he begins to visit it periodically after consumption and indulgence as another form of pleasure seeing how much damage he has done (103). However, the pleasure quickly turns to paranoia as Dorian feels that he cannot leave the country or house for very long in case someone comes across his secret (112). Akin to other Gothic literature, Dorian's portrait becomes the grotesque phantom that haunts his existence. The environment is key to the trope and sets the atmosphere as the supernatural trope needs the appropriate atmosphere to be effective: Dracula's castle, Frankenstein's lab, and the Phantom's opera house to name but a few.

Scholars such as Jerrod Hogle, Kenneth Womack, specifically evaluate the use of the Gothic and its inherent supernatural elements as the tool of Wilde to express his ethical criticism of society and artistic culture (169). James Twitchell contends that the text best represents Gothic revival of the late-nineteenth-century sharing the same "deathless limbo, the same disdain for living, the same sadistic glee at the pains of others, and the same almost uncontrollable desire to destroy what is innocent and good" with the likes of Bram Stoker's character, Dracula (173). However, he indicates that Wilde was not interested in terrorizing his readers as he was in "saying something quite specific about the dynamics of artistic creation" (173). However, Twitchell does not take into account that Dorian's attic is where the true face of the Gothic monster resides and where the climax of Basil's murder eventually takes place after Dorian reveals the painting's nature. In doing so, Wilde unmasks Dorian beyond the supposition of his perceived morality based on his beauty and instead reveals him as the corrupt creature that is seen in the portrait (126). The text does not begin with a skin-crawling atmosphere typical of other popular Victorian Gothic horror texts so this event that sparks the decline of Dorian is one that is intended to shock the spectator. While other Gothic novels portray Victorian London was the embodiment of the empire to be invaded or corrupted due to its virtuous civility and morality and supreme nature, Oscar Wilde maintains that the city as an environment is already corrupted through its population's moral ambiguity and unethical practices despite its beautiful aesthetic.

The novel's theme of aestheticism is a critique of Victorian moral panic. Though Dorian engages in a hedonistic lifestyle that is never fully explored in the initial text, leaving much to the imagination,

Dorian's reputation in the public sphere does fall under scrutiny and scandal. Though many of his social entourage know or have heard of his exploits, they don't ostracize him due to the fact that "civilized society is never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those who are both rich and fascinating... manners are more important than morals and... the highest respectability is of much less value than the possession of a good chef" (113). It is the outward appearance and wealth that determine the quality of the man despite any controversy. It was this hypocritical nature that Wilde seeks to expose with his challenge to the cultural normative. Dorian eventually realizes the emptiness of his life and believes that he may be able to change for the right reason after he meets a woman he is genuinely attracted too (174). But upon seeing portrait after his attempt to reverse the damage that he had caused, all he saw was hypocrisy appear on the face of the portrait (176). In a desperate fit of rage and anguish, he believed that destroying the portrait was the only way he could undo the damage and in doing so he destroyed himself.

The Picture of Dorian Gray is an exemplary piece of Gothic literature of the late nineteenth century but is also a glimpse into common trends of the Victorian mind and nuances of their society. Where other Gothic texts seek to expose insecurities of external pressures or anxiety, Wilde illuminates the danger of the superficial morality inherent with the confines of the fast progressing industrial urban empire. It expresses a commentary on many of the issues surrounding the sole aesthetical nature of Victorian society but also the issues that Wilde had to deal with personally, surrounding social expectations and his own identity and sexuality. Dorian Gray not only symbolizes the hypocrisy of this duplicity but also the complex nature of a nation undergoing a significant industrial, social and cultural revolution.

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Victorian Excerpts

from *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Emily Brontë

Chapter 1

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question.

I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed.

The said Eliza, John, and Georgiana were now clustered round their mama in the drawing-room: she lay reclined on a sofa by the fireside, and with her darlings about her (for the time neither quarrelling nor crying) looked perfectly happy. Me, she had dispensed from joining the group; saying, "She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie, and could discover by her own observation, that I was endeavouring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner—something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were—she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy, little children."

"What does Bessie say I have done?" I asked.

"Jane, I don't like cavillers or questioners; besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent."

A breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase: I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.

I returned to my book—Bewick's History of British Birds: the letterpress thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; and yet there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of "the solitary rocks and promontories" by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape—

> "Wherethe Northern Ocean, in vast whirls,
> Boils round the naked, melancholy isles
> Of farthest Thule; and the Atlantic surge
> Pours in among the stormy Hebrides."

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with "the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space,—that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentre the multiplied rigours of extreme cold." Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive. The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray; to the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast; to the cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking.

I cannot tell what sentiment haunted the quite solitary churchyard, with its inscribed headstone; its gate, its two trees, its low horizon, girdled by a broken wall, and its newly-risen crescent, attesting the hour of eventide.

The two ships becalmed on a torpid sea, I believed to be marine phantoms.

The fiend pinning down the thief's pack behind him, I passed over quickly: it was an object of terror.

So was the black horned thing seated aloof on a rock, surveying a distant crowd surrounding a gallows.

Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting: as interesting as the tales Bessie sometimes narrated on winter evenings, when she chanced to be in good humour; and when, having brought her ironing-table to the nursery hearth, she allowed us to sit about it, and while she got up Mrs. Reed's lace frills, and crimped her nightcap borders, fed our eager attention with passages of love and adventure taken from old fairy tales and other ballads; or (as at a later period I discovered) from the pages of Pamela, and Henry, Earl of Moreland.

With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon. The breakfast-room door opened.

“Boh! Madam Mope!” cried the voice of John Reed; then he paused: he found the room apparently empty.

“Where the dickens is she!” he continued. “Lizzy! Georgy! (calling to his sisters) Joan is not here: tell mama she is run out into the rain—bad animal!”

“It is well I drew the curtain,” thought I; and I wished fervently he might not discover my hiding-place: nor would John Reed have found it out himself; he was not quick either of vision or conception; but Eliza just put her head in at the door, and said at once—

“She is in the window-seat, to be sure, Jack.”

And I came out immediately, for I trembled at the idea of being dragged forth by the said Jack.

“What do you want?” I asked, with awkward diffidence.

“Say, ‘What do you want, Master Reed?’” was the answer. “I want you to come here;” and seating himself in an arm-chair, he intimated by a gesture that I was to approach and stand before him.

John Reed was a schoolboy of fourteen years old; four years older than I, for I was but ten: large and stout for his age, with a dingy and unwholesome skin; thick lineaments in a spacious visage, heavy limbs and large extremities. He gorged himself habitually at table, which made him bilious, and gave him a dim and bleared eye and flabby cheeks. He ought now to have been at school; but his mama had taken him home for a month or two, “on account of his delicate health.” Mr. Miles, the master, affirmed that he would do very well if he had fewer cakes and sweetmeats sent him from home; but the mother’s heart turned from an opinion so harsh, and inclined rather to the more refined idea that John’s sallowness was owing to over-application and, perhaps, to pining after home.

John had not much affection for his mother and sisters, and an antipathy to me. He bullied and punished me; not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually: every nerve I had feared him, and every morsel of flesh in my bones shrank when he came near. There were moments when I was bewildered by the terror he inspired, because I had no appeal whatever against either his menaces or his inflictions; the servants did not like to offend their young master by taking my part against him, and Mrs. Reed was blind and deaf on the subject: she never saw him strike or heard him abuse me, though he did both now and then in her very presence, more frequently, however, behind her back.

Habitually obedient to John, I came up to his chair: he spent some three minutes in thrusting out his tongue at me as far as he could without damaging the roots: I knew he would soon strike, and while dreading the blow, I mused on the disgusting and ugly appearance of him who would presently deal it. I wonder if he read that notion in my face; for, all at once, without speaking, he struck suddenly and strongly. I tottered, and on regaining my equilibrium retired back a step or two from his chair.

"That is for your impudence in answering mama awhile since," said he, "and for your sneaking way of getting behind curtains, and for the look you had in your eyes two minutes since, you rat!"

Accustomed to John Reed's abuse, I never had an idea of replying to it; my care was how to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult.

"What were you doing behind the curtain?" he asked.

"I was reading."

"Show the book."

I returned to the window and fetched it thence.

"You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mama says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mama's expense. Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they *are* mine; all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows."

I did so, not at first aware what was his intention; but when I saw him lift and poise the book and stand in act to hurl it, I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp: my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded.

"Wicked and cruel boy!" I said. "You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!"

I had read Goldsmith's History of Rome, and had formed my opinion of Nero, Caligula, etc. Also I had drawn parallels in silence, which I never thought thus to have declared aloud.

"What! what!" he cried. "Did she say that to me? Did you hear her, Eliza and Georgiana? Won't I tell mama? but first—"

He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant, a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering: these sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in frantic sort. I don't very well know what I did with my hands, but he called me "Rat! Rat!" and bellowed out aloud. Aid was near him: Eliza and Georgiana had run for Mrs. Reed, who was gone upstairs: she now came upon the scene, followed by Bessie and her maid Abbot. We were parted: I heard the words—

"Dear! dear! What a fury to fly at Master John!"

“Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!”

Then Mrs. Reed subjoined—

“Take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there.” Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs.

Chapter 2

I resisted all the way: a new thing for me, and a circumstance which greatly strengthened the bad opinion Bessie and Miss Abbot were disposed to entertain of me. The fact is, I was a trifle beside myself; or rather *out* of myself, as the French would say: I was conscious that a moment’s mutiny had already rendered me liable to strange penalties, and, like any other rebel slave, I felt resolved, in my desperation, to go all lengths.

“Hold her arms, Miss Abbot: she’s like a mad cat.”

“For shame! for shame!” cried the lady’s-maid. “What shocking conduct, Miss Eyre, to strike a young gentleman, your benefactress’s son! Your young master.”

“Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?”

“No; you are less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep. There, sit down, and think over your wickedness.”

They had got me by this time into the apartment indicated by Mrs. Reed, and had thrust me upon a stool: my impulse was to rise from it like a spring; their two pair of hands arrested me instantly.

“If you don’t sit still, you must be tied down,” said Bessie. “Miss Abbot, lend me your garters; she would break mine directly.”

Miss Abbot turned to divest a stout leg of the necessary ligature. This preparation for bonds, and the additional ignominy it inferred, took a little of the excitement out of me.

“Don’t take them off,” I cried; “I will not stir.”

In guarantee whereof, I attached myself to my seat by my hands.

“Mind you don’t,” said Bessie; and when she had ascertained that I was really subsiding, she loosened her hold of me; then she and Miss Abbot stood with folded arms, looking darkly and doubtfully on my face, as incredulous of my sanity.

“She never did so before,” at last said Bessie, turning to the Abigail.

“But it was always in her,” was the reply. “I’ve told Missis often my opinion about the child, and Missis agreed with me. She’s an underhand little thing: I never saw a girl of her age with so much cover.”

Bessie answered not; but ere long, addressing me, she said—“You ought to be aware, Miss, that you are under obligations to Mrs. Reed: she keeps you: if she were to turn you off, you would have to go to the poorhouse.”

I had nothing to say to these words: they were not new to me: my very first recollections of existence included hints of the same kind. This reproach of my dependence had become a vague sing-song in my ear: very painful and crushing, but only half intelligible. Miss Abbot joined in—

“And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, because Missis kindly allows you to be brought up with them. They will have a great deal of money, and you will have none: it is your place to be humble, and to try to make yourself agreeable to them.”

“What we tell you is for your good,” added Bessie, in no harsh voice, “you should try to be useful and pleasant, then, perhaps, you would have a home here; but if you become passionate and rude, Missis will send you away, I am sure.”

“Besides,” said Miss Abbot, “God will punish her: He might strike her dead in the midst of her tantrums, and then where would she go? Come, Bessie, we will leave her: I wouldn’t have her heart for anything. Say your prayers, Miss Eyre, when you are by yourself; for if you don’t repent, something bad might be permitted to come down the chimney and fetch you away.”

They went, shutting the door, and locking it behind them.

The red-room was a square chamber, very seldom slept in, I might say never, indeed, unless when a chance influx of visitors at Gateshead Hall rendered it necessary to turn to account all the accommodation it contained: yet it was one of the largest and stateliest chambers in the mansion. A bed supported on massive pillars of mahogany, hung with curtains of deep red damask, stood out like a tabernacle in the centre; the two large windows, with their blinds always drawn down, were half shrouded in festoons and falls of similar drapery; the carpet was red; the table at the foot of the bed was covered with a crimson cloth; the walls were a soft fawn colour with a blush of pink in it; the wardrobe, the toilet-table, the chairs were of darkly polished old mahogany. Out of these deep surrounding shades rose high, and glared white, the piled-up mattresses and pillows of the bed, spread with a snowy Marseilles counterpane. Scarcely less prominent was an ample cushioned easy-chair near the head of the bed, also white, with a footstool before it; and looking, as I thought, like a pale throne.

This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire; it was silent, because remote from the nursery and kitchen; solemn, because it was known to be so seldom entered. The house-maid alone came here on Saturdays, to wipe from the mirrors and the furniture a week’s quiet dust: and Mrs. Reed herself, at far intervals, visited it to review the contents of a certain secret drawer in the wardrobe, where were stored

divers parchments, her jewel-casket, and a miniature of her deceased husband; and in those last words lies the secret of the red-room—the spell which kept it so lonely in spite of its grandeur.

Mr. Reed had been dead nine years: it was in this chamber he breathed his last; here he lay in state; hence his coffin was borne by the undertaker's men; and, since that day, a sense of dreary consecration had guarded it from frequent intrusion.

My seat, to which Bessie and the bitter Miss Abbot had left me riveted, was a low ottoman near the marble chimney-piece; the bed rose before me; to my right hand there was the high, dark wardrobe, with subdued, broken reflections varying the gloss of its panels; to my left were the muffled windows; a great looking-glass between them repeated the vacant majesty of the bed and room. I was not quite sure whether they had locked the door; and when I dared move, I got up and went to see. Alas! yes: no jail was ever more secure. Returning, I had to cross before the looking-glass; my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed. All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality: and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie's evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travellers. I returned to my stool.

Superstition was with me at that moment; but it was not yet her hour for complete victory: my blood was still warm; the mood of the revolted slave was still bracing me with its bitter vigour; I had to stem a rapid rush of retrospective thought before I quailed to the dismal present.

All John Reed's violent tyrannies, all his sisters' proud indifference, all his mother's aversion, all the servants' partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well. Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, for ever condemned? Why could I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one's favour? Eliza, who was headstrong and selfish, was respected. Georgiana, who had a spoiled temper, a very acrid spite, a captious and insolent carriage, was universally indulged. Her beauty, her pink cheeks and golden curls, seemed to give delight to all who looked at her, and to purchase indemnity for every fault. John no one thwarted, much less punished; though he twisted the necks of the pigeons, killed the little pea-chicks, set the dogs at the sheep, stripped the hothouse vines of their fruit, and broke the buds off the choicest plants in the conservatory: he called his mother "old girl," too; sometimes reviled her for her dark skin, similar to his own; bluntly disregarded her wishes; not unfrequently tore and spoiled her silk attire; and he was still "her own darling." I dared commit no fault: I strove to fulfil every duty; and I was termed naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon, and from noon to night.

My head still ached and bled with the blow and fall I had received: no one had reproved John for wantonly striking me; and because I had turned against him to avert farther irrational violence, I was loaded with general opprobrium.

"Unjust!—unjust!" said my reason, forced by the agonising stimulus into precocious though transitory power: and Resolve, equally wrought up, instigated some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression—as running away, or, if that could not be effected, never eating or drinking more, and letting myself die.

What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance, was the mental battle fought! I could not answer the ceaseless inward question—*why* I thus suffered; now, at the distance of—I will not say how many years, I see it clearly.

I was a discord in Gateshead Hall: I was like nobody there; I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathise with one amongst them; a heterogeneous thing, opposed to them in temperament, in capacity, in propensities; a useless thing, incapable of serving their interest, or adding to their pleasure; a noxious thing, cherishing the germs of indignation at their treatment, of contempt of their judgment. I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child—though equally dependent and friendless—Mrs. Reed would have endured my presence more complacently; her children would have entertained for me more of the cordiality of fellow-feeling; the servants would have been less prone to make me the scapegoat of the nursery.

Daylight began to forsake the red-room; it was past four o'clock, and the beclouded afternoon was tending to drear twilight. I heard the rain still beating continuously on the staircase window, and the wind howling in the grove behind the hall; I grew by degrees cold as a stone, and then my courage sank. My habitual mood of humiliation, self-doubt, forlorn depression, fell damp on the embers of my decaying ire. All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so; what thought had I been but just conceiving of starving myself to death? That certainly was a crime: and was I fit to die? Or was the vault under the chancel of Gateshead Church an inviting bourne? In such vault I had been told did Mr. Reed lie buried; and led by this thought to recall his idea, I dwelt on it with gathering dread. I could not remember him; but I knew that he was my own uncle—my mother's brother—that he had taken me when a parentless infant to his house; and that in his last moments he had required a promise of Mrs. Reed that she would rear and maintain me as one of her own children. Mrs. Reed probably considered she had kept this promise; and so she had, I dare say, as well as her nature would permit her; but how could she really like an interloper not of her race, and unconnected with her, after her husband's death, by any tie? It must have been most irksome to find herself bound by a hard-wrung pledge to stand in the stead of a parent to a strange child she could not love, and to see an uncongenial alien permanently intruded on her own family group.

A singular notion dawned upon me. I doubted not—never doubted—that if Mr. Reed had been alive he would have treated me kindly; and now, as I sat looking at the white bed and overshadowed walls—occasionally also turning a fascinated eye towards the dimly gleaning mirror—I began to recall what I had

heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed; and I thought Mr. Reed's spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister's child, might quit its abode—whether in the church vault or in the unknown world of the departed—and rise before me in this chamber. I wiped my tears and hushed my sobs, fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face, bending over me with strange pity. This idea, consolatory in theory, I felt would be terrible if realised: with all my might I endeavoured to stifle it—I endeavoured to be firm. Shaking my hair from my eyes, I lifted my head and tried to look boldly round the dark room; at this moment a light gleamed on the wall. Was it, I asked myself, a ray from the moon penetrating some aperture in the blind? No; moonlight was still, and this stirred; while I gazed, it glided up to the ceiling and quivered over my head. I can now conjecture readily that this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern carried by some one across the lawn: but then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort. Steps came running along the outer passage; the key turned, Bessie and Abbot entered.

"Miss Eyre, are you ill?" said Bessie.

"What a dreadful noise! it went quite through me!" exclaimed Abbot.

"Take me out! Let me go into the nursery!" was my cry.

"What for? Are you hurt? Have you seen something?" again demanded Bessie.

"Oh! I saw a light, and I thought a ghost would come." I had now got hold of Bessie's hand, and she did not snatch it from me.

"She has screamed out on purpose," declared Abbot, in some disgust. "And what a scream! If she had been in great pain one would have excused it, but she only wanted to bring us all here: I know her naughty tricks."

"What is all this?" demanded another voice peremptorily; and Mrs. Reed came along the corridor, her cap flying wide, her gown rustling stormily. "Abbot and Bessie, I believe I gave orders that Jane Eyre should be left in the red-room till I came to her myself."

"Miss Jane screamed so loud, ma'am," pleaded Bessie.

"Let her go," was the only answer. "Loose Bessie's hand, child: you cannot succeed in getting out by these means, be assured. I abhor artifice, particularly in children; it is my duty to show you that tricks will not

answer: you will now stay here an hour longer, and it is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that I shall liberate you then."

"O aunt! have pity! Forgive me! I cannot endure it—let me be punished some other way! I shall be killed if —"

"Silence! This violence is all most repulsive:" and so, no doubt, she felt it. I was a precocious actress in her eyes; she sincerely looked on me as a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity.

Bessie and Abbot having retreated, Mrs. Reed, impatient of my now frantic anguish and wild sobs, abruptly thrust me back and locked me in, without farther parley. I heard her sweeping away; and soon after she was gone, I suppose I had a species of fit: unconsciousness closed the scene.

from *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë

Chapter 1

1801—I have just returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's Heaven—and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name.

"Mr. Heathcliff?" I said.

A nod was the answer.

"Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant, sir. I do myself the honour of calling as soon as possible after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not inconvenienced you by my perseverance in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard yesterday you had had some thoughts—"

"Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir," he interrupted, wincing. "I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it—walk in!"

The "walk in" was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, "Go to the Deuce!" even the gate over which he leant manifested no sympathising movement to the words; and I think that circumstance determined me to accept the invitation: I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself.

When he saw my horse's breast fairly pushing the barrier, he did put out his hand to unchain it, and then sullenly preceded me up the causeway, calling, as we entered the court,—"Joseph, take Mr. Lockwood's

horse; and bring up some wine."

"Here we have the whole establishment of domestics, I suppose," was the reflection suggested by this compound order. "No wonder the grass grows up between the flags, and cattle are the only hedge-cutters."

Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man, very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy. "The Lord help us!" he soliloquised in an undertone of peevish displeasure, while relieving me of my horse: looking, meantime, in my face so sourly that I charitably conjectured he must have need of divine aid to digest his dinner, and his pious ejaculation had no reference to my unexpected advent.

Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. "Wuthering" being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.

Before passing the threshold, I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door; above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys, I detected the date "1500," and the name "Hareton Earnshaw." I would have made a few comments, and requested a short history of the place from the surly owner; but his attitude at the door appeared to demand my speedy entrance, or complete departure, and I had no desire to aggravate his impatience previous to inspecting the penetralium.

One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here "the house" pre-eminently. It includes kitchen and parlour, generally; but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter: at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fireplace; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter had never been under-drawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols: and, by way of ornament, three gaudily painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth, white stone; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses.

The apartment and furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a homely, northern farmer, with a stubborn countenance, and stalwart limbs set out to advantage in knee-breeches and gaiters. Such an individual seated in his arm-chair, his mug of ale frothing on the round table before him, is to be seen in any circuit of five or six miles among these hills, if you go at the right time after dinner. But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose. Possibly, some people might suspect him of a degree of under-bred pride; I have a sympathetic chord within that tells me it is nothing of the sort: I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling—to manifestations of mutual kindliness. He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again. No, I'm running on too fast: I bestow my own attributes over-liberally on him. Mr. Heathcliff may have entirely dissimilar reasons for keeping his hand out of the way when he meets a would-be acquaintance, to those which actuate me. Let me hope my constitution is almost peculiar: my dear mother used to say I should never have a comfortable home; and only last summer I proved myself perfectly unworthy of one.

While enjoying a month of fine weather at the sea-coast, I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I "never told my love" vocally; still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over head and ears: she understood me at last, and looked a return—the sweetest of all imaginable looks. And what did I do? I confess it with shame—shrunk icily into myself, like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther; till finally the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses, and, overwhelmed with confusion at her supposed mistake, persuaded her mamma to decamp.

By this curious turn of disposition I have gained the reputation of deliberate heartlessness; how undeserved, I alone can appreciate.

I took a seat at the end of the hearthstone opposite that towards which my landlord advanced, and filled up an interval of silence by attempting to caress the canine mother, who had left her nursery, and was sneaking wolfishly to the back of my legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch. My caress provoked a long, guttural gnarl.

"You'd better let the dog alone," growled Mr. Heathcliff in unison, checking fiercer demonstrations with a punch of his foot. "She's not accustomed to be spoiled—not kept for a pet." Then, striding to a side door, he shouted again, "Joseph!"

Joseph mumbled indistinctly in the depths of the cellar, but gave no intimation of ascending; so his master dived down to him, leaving me *vis-à-vis* the ruffianly bitch and a pair of grim shaggy sheep-dogs, who shared with her a jealous guardianship over all my movements. Not anxious to come in contact with their fangs, I sat still; but, imagining they would scarcely understand tacit insults, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the trio, and some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam,

that she suddenly broke into a fury and leapt on my knees. I flung her back, and hastened to interpose the table between us. This proceeding aroused the whole hive: half-a-dozen four-footed fiends, of various sizes and ages, issued from hidden dens to the common centre. I felt my heels and coat-laps peculiar subjects of assault; and parrying off the larger combatants as effectually as I could with the poker, I was constrained to demand, aloud, assistance from some of the household in re-establishing peace.

Mr. Heathcliff and his man climbed the cellar steps with vexatious phlegm: I don't think they moved one second faster than usual, though the hearth was an absolute tempest of worrying and yelping. Happily, an inhabitant of the kitchen made more dispatch; a lusty dame, with tucked-up gown, bare arms, and fire-flushed cheeks, rushed into the midst of us flourishing a frying-pan: and used that weapon, and her tongue, to such purpose, that the storm subsided magically, and she only remained, heaving like a sea after a high wind, when her master entered on the scene.

"What the devil is the matter?" he asked, eyeing me in a manner that I could ill endure after this inhospitable treatment.

"What the devil, indeed!" I muttered. "The herd of possessed swine could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals of yours, sir. You might as well leave a stranger with a brood of tigers!"

"They won't meddle with persons who touch nothing," he remarked, putting the bottle before me, and restoring the displaced table. "The dogs do right to be vigilant. Take a glass of wine?"

"No, thank you."

"Not bitten, are you?"

"If I had been, I would have set my signet on the biter." Heathcliff's countenance relaxed into a grin.

"Come, come," he said, "you are flurried, Mr. Lockwood. Here, take a little wine. Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them. Your health, sir?"

I bowed and returned the pledge; beginning to perceive that it would be foolish to sit sulking for the misbehaviour of a pack of curs; besides, I felt loth to yield the fellow further amusement at my expense; since his humour took that turn. He—probably swayed by prudential consideration of the folly of offending a good tenant—relaxed a little in the laconic style of chipping off his pronouns and auxiliary verbs, and introduced what he supposed would be a subject of interest to me,—a discourse on the advantages and disadvantages of my present place of retirement. I found him very intelligent on the topics we touched; and before I went home, I was encouraged so far as to volunteer another visit to-morrow. He evidently wished no repetition of my intrusion. I shall go, notwithstanding. It is astonishing how sociable I feel myself compared with him.

from Chapter Three

I began to dream, almost before I ceased to be sensible of my locality. I thought it was morning; and I had set out on my way home, with Joseph for a guide. The snow lay yards deep in our road; and, as we floundered on, my companion wearied me with constant reproaches that I had not brought a pilgrim's staff: telling me that I could never get into the house without one, and boastfully flourishing a heavy-headed cudgel, which I understood to be so denominated. For a moment I considered it absurd that I should need such a weapon to gain admittance into my own residence. Then a new idea flashed across me. I was not going there: we were journeying to hear the famous Jabez Branderham preach, from the text —"Seventy Times Seven;" and either Joseph, the preacher, or I had committed the "First of the Seventy-First," and were to be publicly exposed and excommunicated.

We came to the chapel. I have passed it really in my walks, twice or thrice; it lies in a hollow, between two hills: an elevated hollow, near a swamp, whose peaty moisture is said to answer all the purposes of embalming on the few corpses deposited there. The roof has been kept whole hitherto; but as the clergyman's stipend is only twenty pounds per annum, and a house with two rooms, threatening speedily to determine into one, no clergyman will undertake the duties of pastor: especially as it is currently reported that his flock would rather let him starve than increase the living by one penny from their own pockets. However, in my dream, Jabez had a full and attentive congregation; and he preached—good God! what a sermon; divided into *four hundred and ninety* parts, each fully equal to an ordinary address from the pulpit, and each discussing a separate sin! Where he searched for them, I cannot tell. He had his private manner of interpreting the phrase, and it seemed necessary the brother should sin different sins on every occasion. They were of the most curious character: odd transgressions that I never imagined previously.

Oh, how weary I grew. How I writhed, and yawned, and nodded, and revived! How I pinched and pricked myself, and rubbed my eyes, and stood up, and sat down again, and nudged Joseph to inform me if he would *ever* have done. I was condemned to hear all out: finally, he reached the "*First of the Seventy-First*." At that crisis, a sudden inspiration descended on me; I was moved to rise and denounce Jabez Branderham as the sinner of the sin that no Christian need pardon.

"Sir," I exclaimed, "sitting here within these four walls, at one stretch, I have endured and forgiven the four hundred and ninety heads of your discourse. Seventy times seven times have I plucked up my hat and been about to depart—Seventy times seven times have you preposterously forced me to resume my seat. The four hundred and ninety-first is too much. Fellow-martyrs, have at him! Drag him down, and crush him to atoms, that the place which knows him may know him no more!"

"*Thou art the Man!*" cried Jabez, after a solemn pause, leaning over his cushion. "Seventy times seven times didst thou gapingly contort thy visage—seventy times seven did I take counsel with my soul—Lo, this is human weakness: this also may be absolved! The First of the Seventy-First is come. Brethren, execute upon him the judgment written. Such honour have all His saints!"

With that concluding word, the whole assembly, exalting their pilgrim's staves, rushed round me in a body; and I, having no weapon to raise in self-defence, commenced grappling with Joseph, my nearest and most ferocious assailant, for his. In the confluence of the multitude, several clubs crossed; blows, aimed at me, fell on other sconces. Presently the whole chapel resounded with rappings and counter rappings: every man's hand was against his neighbour; and Branderham, unwilling to remain idle, poured forth his zeal in a shower of loud taps on the boards of the pulpit, which responded so smartly that, at last, to my unspeakable relief, they woke me. And what was it that had suggested the tremendous tumult? What had played Jabez's part in the row? Merely the branch of a fir-tree that touched my lattice as the blast wailed by, and rattled its dry cones against the panes! I listened doubtingly an instant; detected the disturber, then turned and dozed, and dreamt again: if possible, still more disagreeably than before.

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. "I must stop it, nevertheless!" I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed,

"Let me in—let me in!"

"Who are you?" I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself.

"Catherine Linton," it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton)—"I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!"

As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, "Let me in!" and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear.

"How can I!" I said at length. "Let *me* go, if you want me to let you in!"

The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer.

I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on!

"Begone!" I shouted. "I'll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years."

"It is twenty years," mourned the voice: "twenty years. I've been a waif for twenty years!"

Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward.

I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright.

To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering, yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself.

At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer,

"Is any one here?"

I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff's accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet.

With this intention, I turned and opened the panels. I shall not soon forget the effect my action produced.

Heathcliff stood near the entrance, in his shirt and trousers; with a candle dripping over his fingers, and his face as white as the wall behind him. The first creak of the oak startled him like an electric shock: the light leaped from his hold to a distance of some feet, and his agitation was so extreme, that he could hardly pick it up.

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Full Text

The Strange Case Of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson

Introduction

By Greg Buzwell

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) is a late-Victorian variation on ideas first raised in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Stevenson's monster, however, is not artificially created from stitched-together body parts, but rather emerges fully formed from the dark side of the human personality. In the story Dr Jekyll, an admired member of the professional Victorian middle-classes, conducts a series of scientific experiments which unleash from his own psyche the 'bestial' and 'ape-like' Mr Hyde (ch. 10). Gothic fiction had examined the idea of the sinister alter ego or double before on many occasions but Stevenson's genius with Jekyll and Hyde was to show the dual nature not only of one man but also of society in general. Throughout the story, respectability is doubled with degradation; abandon with restraint; honesty with duplicity. Even London itself has a dual nature, with its respectable streets existing side-by-side with areas notorious for their squalor and violence.

Viewed on a simple level, Dr Jekyll is a good man, much admired in his profession. Mr Hyde, meanwhile, is evil. He is a murderer; a monster who tramples upon a small girl simply because she happens to be in his way. On a deeper level, however, the comparison is not merely between good and evil but between evolution and degeneration. Throughout the narrative Mr Hyde's physical appearance provokes disgust. He is described as 'ape-like', 'troglodytic' and 'hardly human' (ch. 2). As Mr Enfield, a well-known man about town and distant relative of Jekyll's friend Mr Utterson, observes 'There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable' (ch. 1). Some 15 years before *Jekyll and Hyde*, Charles Darwin had published *The Descent of Man* (1871), a book in which he concluded that humankind had 'descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped' which was itself 'probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal'.[1] Going back even further, Darwin hypothesised that these stages of evolution had been preceded, in a direct line, by 'some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal'. Such a nightmarish biological lineage that denied the specialness of humans, feeds into many late-Victorian Gothic novels. Dracula's ability to transform into the shape of a wolf or a bat is one example, while Dr Moreau's experiments upon the hapless animals on his island as he attempts a barbaric form of accelerated evolution is another. Stevenson's portrayal of Hyde works in a similar fashion. Mr Hyde is regarded as physically detestable but perhaps only because he subconsciously reminds those he encounters of their own distant evolutionary inheritance. When Dr Jekyll's medical colleague, Dr Lanyon, witnesses Hyde transform back into Jekyll, the knowledge that the ugly, murderous beast exists within the respectable Victorian scientist sends him first to his sick-bed, and then to an early grave.

The depiction of Dr Jekyll's house was possibly based on the residence of famous surgeon John Hunter (1728-1793), whose respectable and renowned house in Leicester Square in the late 18th century also had a secret. In order to teach and to gain knowledge about human anatomy, Hunter required human cadavers, many of them supplied by 'resurrection men' who robbed fresh graves. These were brought, usually at night, to the back entrance of the house, which had a drawbridge leading to the preparation rooms and lecture-theatre.

The front aspect of Dr Jekyll's house presents a 'great air of wealth and comfort' (ch. 2). Meanwhile Mr Hyde, soon after we first encounter him, is seen entering a building which displays an air of 'prolonged and sordid negligence' (ch.1). The twist is that the reputable front and the rundown rear form two sides of the same property. Stevenson is not only making the point that the respectable and the disreputable frequently exist in close proximity, but also that a respectable façade is no guarantee against dark secrets lurking within. In a similar fashion, the seemingly decent Mr Enfield, a friend of the lawyer Mr Utterson, first encounters Hyde while 'coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning' (ch. 1). Exactly where Mr Enfield has been, and what he has been up to, are never made clear but it sounds far from innocent. Throughout the book the people and events that initially seem innocent and straightforward become dark and sinister when viewed more closely.

Just as the differing appearances of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde play upon the theories emerging from Charles Darwin's work, so their differing personalities explore contemporary debates about moral behaviour and

the possible plurality of human consciousness. By literally splitting the consciousness of Dr Jekyll into two – the decent side that attempts, and largely succeeds, in suppressing desires that run contrary to the dictates of society; and the amoral side that runs riot in an attempt to gratify animal desire – Stevenson explores in a heightened fashion the battles played out in every one of us. As Dr Jekyll observes 'I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both' (ch. 10). Through Hyde, the respectable Dr Jekyll is freed from the restraints imposed by society – 'my devil had been long caged, he came out roaring' (ch. 10). In his confession at the end of the book, Jekyll observes that, ultimately, he will have to choose between being Dr Jekyll or Mr Hyde. To become the latter would mean giving up on noble aspirations and being 'forever despised and friendless'. (ch. 10) To become Jekyll, however, means giving up the sensual and disreputable appetites he can indulge as Hyde. In spite of the curious circumstances of his own case it is, as the melancholy Jekyll observes, a struggle and debate 'as old and commonplace as man' (ch. 10).

In an early draft of the book, Stevenson has Dr Jekyll confess 'From an early age…I became in secret the slave of certain appetites'. Such an observation inevitably leads us to wonder what such 'appetites' could have been. For some as the book's other characters – as well as the first readers of the book – unaware that Jekyll and Hyde are the same person, the relationship between the two must have appeared puzzling. Why would the respectable Jekyll grant the vile Hyde free access to his house, let alone alter his will so that in the event of his death or disappearance Hyde will inherit. For Mr Enfield there can only be one answer: 'Blackmail, I suppose; an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth' (ch. 1). Stevenson, because of the era in which he was writing, could not make specific references to homosexuality, but much of the plot initially hints at Hyde blackmailing Jekyll because of the doctor's unorthodox sexual preferences.

Homosexuality and blackmail were frequently linked in this period. Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885 (the year in which Stevenson was writing his tale), made 'gross indecency' – a nebulous term that was not precisely defined – a criminal activity. In practice, the Act was primarily used to prosecute homosexuals on the flimsiest of evidence and was dubbed a 'Blackmailer's Charter'. Dr Jekyll is a bachelor – indeed the entire story is played out amongst a small circle of unmarried men. As implied by comments such as Mr Utterson's 'It turns me cold to think of this creature [Hyde] stealing like a thief to Harry's bedside', homosexuality (either as a secret from the doctor's past, or else as a current relationship between the youthful Hyde and the lonely Jekyll) is a thinly-veiled theme throughout (ch. 2). Even the behaviour of the elderly MP Sir Danvers Carew, who meets his death at Edward Hyde's hands after 'accosting' Hyde 'with a very pretty manner' late one night down by the river, takes on a new light once the reader becomes aware of homosexuality as an undercurrent in the story (ch. 3). In this tale of double-lives nobody is quite what they initially appear to be.

The fascinating instances of doubling in Stevenson's tale did not come to an end upon the book's publication. In a macabre twist, events from real life began to overlay themselves upon the narrative. The Whitechapel Murders occurred in the autumn of 1888, two years after the publication of Jekyll and Hyde,

and the real murderer and the fictitious Mr Hyde were swiftly paired in the public imagination. Indeed, the murders became so entangled with the story, Richard Mansfield who famously played Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in the stage adaptation produced a year after the publication of the novel, was accused of being the Ripper murderer by a member of the public.

When Hyde attacks Sir Danvers Carew he beats him to death with his walking stick, commenting afterwards 'With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow' (ch. 10). The ferocity of the attack mirrors the intensity of the Ripper murders. Jekyll and Hyde pointed towards an unpalatable truth. Mr Hyde, with his 'ape-like' appearance conformed to contemporary criminological theory in which delinquents displayed visible traits indicative of their unpalatable natures. Dr Jekyll, however, a 'large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty' would not conform to such a theory and yet, as we know, Jekyll and Hyde are one and the same; two faces of a single personality (ch. 3). This leads to the uncomfortable possibility that one could pass a monster such as Jack the Ripper in the street and yet only see a respectable, civilised gentleman exhibiting absolutely no trace of the depraved killer lurking within Jekyll and Hyde and Jack the Ripper.

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Full Text

The Hound of the Baskervilles (1902) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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"Sherlock Holmes"

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Even if you've never read the original books, chances are you can picture Sherlock Holmes. The pipe, magnifying glass and deerstalker hat. The flat at 221B Baker Street in central London (now a museum). The faithful companion, Watson, and the arch-enemy, Professor Moriarty. Crimes that leave the police dumbfounded, only to be solved by the most brilliant detective the world has ever known. In the years since the original 'Holmes canon' was written, from roughly 1886 to 1927, the legend has been burnished by franchises such as the BBC's *Sherlock* starring Benedict Cumberbatch, in which the great investigator comes back to life in the 21st century, ready to grapple with a new generation of criminal masterminds.

It might come as a surprise that the creator of this most enduring of English literary icons wasn't English at all, but Scottish. Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh in 1859, and as a young child was sent away to a Catholic boarding school, which he hated. Like a number of middle-class Scottish boys of his generation, he opted to study medicine, and entered Edinburgh Medical School in 1876.

Although this, too, seems a world away from his later writing, in fact it was one of his professors at Edinburgh, an expert in medical diagnostics called Joseph Bell, who seems to have been the inspiration for the master sleuth Holmes. Bell claimed not only to be able to diagnose a patient's disease from scientific observation, but their background and job – carefully noting such details as a sailor's gait or a housemaid's callused hands, and using these to build up a portrait of what lay behind an illness. Conan Doyle's autobiography also recalls the influence of his mother, herself a talented and lively storyteller. And by the time he entered medical college he had begun writing, publishing a few stories in small literary magazines.

In 1885, he married his first wife, Louisa Hawkins, and all seemed set for a conventional life as a doctor. But Conan Doyle had other ambitions, and by 1886 he had completed what would become the first Sherlock Holmes story, 'A Study in Scarlet'. Opening with a mysterious murder in a London town house, which turns out to relate to events in Salt Lake City in the distant west of the United States, it introduces elements now familiar to millions of readers worldwide – the idiosyncratic but supernaturally intelligent Holmes (a violin-playing, cocaine-using freelance 'consulting detective'), his faithful companion and assistant Watson, the well-meaning police inspector Lestrade, and a crime so fiendishly complex that only Holmes can solve it. Even so, the story was almost totally ignored when it came out. So too was the next Holmes tale, 'The Sign of Four' (1890). The author himself much preferred his novel *Micah Clark* (1889), a coming-of-age story set in 17th-century Scotland. Much later it was revealed that Holmes had very nearly not been called 'Holmes' at all, but 'Sherrington Hope'.

Even though the reception of the first two Holmes stories was muted, the detective's fame grew, particularly in the United States. When Conan Doyle wrote two further stories for *The Strand Magazine*, they were an enormous commercial success. The artist Sydney Paget's alert and sharp-featured depiction of the detective fixed the image in readers' minds. He was a sensation.

Paradoxically, this put Conan Doyle in a quandary that was to last the rest of his life. On the one hand, Holmes was becoming a cult, readers begging the author to come up with more and more material on top of the stories he had already penned. On the other, he had only ever intended to write detective thrillers as commercial potboilers. Their success seemed likely to distract from his more 'serious' novels and stories.

What followed was one of the most infamous incidents in 19th-century literary life. Determined to rid himself of his hero, Conan Doyle dispatched Holmes in 1893's 'The Final Problem' by having him engage in an apparent fight to the death with Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland. The diary entry for the day the author completed the story reads, with a mixture of exhaustion and relief, 'Killed Holmes'. He would devote himself to historical fiction, completing a number of novels and plays in coming years.

Yet readers refused to take things lying down, and mounted a campaign to have Holmes resurrected. Conan Doyle did his best to ignore it, travelling widely and, in early 1900, volunteering as a doctor during the Boer War then raging in South Africa. Later that year, he published a best-selling account of the

conflict. He was also concerned with his own political ambitions, which resulted in two failed attempts to be elected as a member of Parliament. There were concerns closer to home, too: Louisa had been diagnosed with tuberculosis, and was ailing. After her death in 1906, he married a woman he had met and most likely fallen in love with many years before, Jean Beckie.

In 1901 Conan Doyle took the fateful decision to include the character of Holmes in a novel he had been toying with, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, inspired by trips he made to Dartmoor in the south-west of England with a young journalist called Bertram Fletcher Robinson. 'It is a great place, very sad & wild', he wrote in a letter – a Gothic atmosphere that seeps into this gloomy saga of unexplained deaths and an apparently wild beast on the loose. To get past the awkward fact that Holmes was meant to have expired at the Reichenbach Falls, Conan Doyle placed *The Hound* in an earlier timeframe.

He displayed no such worries in the next story he wrote, 'The Adventure of the Empty House' (1905), which depicts Holmes reappearing in London in disguise and casually explaining that only Moriarty had died at the Falls that day, while he himself had escaped (sharp-eyed readers note that Watson never actually witnesses the incident). The series would continue for the next 25 years.

By the time it was complete in 1927, some 56 stories and four novels had been published, and Conan Doyle was one of the most widely read and translated writers of his generation. 'The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter' came soon after *The Hound* in 1904, and relates the story of an Oxford student's inexplicable disappearance. One of the last tales, 'The Adventure of the Retired Colourman' (1926), unusually features Watson in a starring rather than supporting role, on the case of a suspicious art dealer and his missing wife.

Despite his immense fame and wealth, Conan Doyle remained irked by the fact that his literary writings were not taken more seriously, and threw himself into a huge number of side projects, notably sport and outdoor pursuits (legend has it that he introduced Norwegian downhill skis into the Swiss Alps).

He also regarded his most important public work to have been in 'spiritualism', based on research supposedly demonstrating that the souls of the dead could be contacted by the living, which had become fashionable in England partly because of the devastating toll of the First World War. Perhaps influenced by the fact that his own son, Kingsley, died in 1918 in the great influenza epidemic that year, Conan Doyle poured endless time and money into 'the psychic question', and published a series of increasingly eccentric books, notably *The Case for Spirit Photography* and *The Coming of the Fairies* (both 1922) and *The History of Spiritualism* (1926).

On the author's death in 1930, the Royal Albert Hall filled with fans, who took part in a huge séance in his honour. By then, his literary immortality was already assured: according to *The Guinness Book of Records*, Sherlock Holmes is the most portrayed movie and TV character of all time.

Footnotes

1. Anonymous, “Review of Frankenstein“, *Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany*, 2 (1818), 249–53 (p. 249). ↩

2. See Carolyn Williams, “‘Inhumanly Brought Bach to Life and Misery’: Mary Wollstonecraft, Frankenstein, and the Royal Humane Society”, Women’s Writing, 8.2 (2001), 213–34. ↩

3. Quoted in Daniel Arasse, The Guillotine and the Terror, trans. by Christopher Miller (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), p. 37. ↩

4. James Curry, Observations on Apparent Death from Drowning, Hanging, Suffocation by Noxious Vapours, Fainting-Fits, Intoxication, Lightning, Exposure to Cold, &c., &c. and an account of the proper means to be employed for recovery [...], 2nd edn (London: E. Cox and Son, 1815), ch. 1. ↩

5. Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, The Newgate Calendar, 4 vols. (London: J. Robbins and Co, 1825), iii, 317-318. ↩

6. The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by F. L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), ii, 104, 25 July 1819. ↩

7. See Sharon Ruston, Shelley and Vitality (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). ↩